THE RISE OF MODERN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

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THE RISE OF MODERN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

WORKS ON MODERN THEOLOGY

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THE RISE OF MODERN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

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THE RISE OF MODERN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

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TO

FRANCIS BROWN

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF

A FELLOWSHIP OF MORE THAN A SCORE OF YEARS

EDITORIAL NOTE

THE volumes of this series are severally designed to embody the results of such theological research, reconstruction, and readjustment as have thus far taken place, especially during the last half-century.

That the work already done in this line leaves no more of it to be expected and desired is as foreign to the thought of the present collaborators as confidence in a perfected work was native in the thought of the old divines.

That the systematic theology framed by these has hopelessly broken down in the collapse of the ancient conceptions of God, of Nature, of the Bible, and of man, which molded and sustained it, is now frankly confessed in the chief seats of theological instruction. Much of it still survives. Though in modern time, it is not of it, and is gradually yielding to the transforming influences of modern knowledge.

The modern theologian believes and intends to remember with Paul, that "we know in part, and we prophesy in part." Certain of the things that cannot be shaken, that remain our heritage forever, he is as mindful of successors, whom ever growing knowledge will enable to improve upon his work, as he is of predecessors, whose work he has similarly been enabled to improve upon.

Thus recognizing his limitations he is content to contribute in these volumes what he can from the attainments of the present toward the advance of future generations in knowledge of the works and ways of the Infinite Spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. J. M. W.

PREFACE

THIS volume is based upon the Earl Lectures, given before the Pacific Theological Seminary, at Berkeley, California, in September, 1912.

A number of years ago, in response to the request of Doctor James M. Whiton, I promised to write a book on the "Antecedents of Modern Theology," as one of a series dealing with modern religious thought. Circumstances delayed its preparation, and, when the invitation was received to give the Earl Lectures, it seemed wise to take a kindred theme as the subject of the course. With the gracious approval, both of the seminary authorities and of the editor of the series, the present volume, which contains the substance of the lectures, but in a different form and considerably enlarged, appears as the first of the series on modern religious thought.

The limits imposed by the nature of the series, while permitting a more extended discussion than was possible in a course of six lectures, yet forbade aught but a summary treatment of a few representative topics, and even these, I am well aware, are presented in an all too fragmentary and incomplete fashion. But, in spite of its limitations, it is hoped that the book may serve its purpose, not as a history of modern religious

thought, which it does not pretend to be, but as an account of the influences which have promoted, and of the circumstances which have attended, the rise of some of the leading religious ideas of the present day, in so far as they differ from the ideas of other days, and hence may fairly be called modern. If as such it shall in any degree contribute to an understanding of the existing situation, its aim will have been achieved.

Thanks are due to my colleagues, Professor George A. Coe and Professor Thomas C. Hall, for their kindness in reading the proof of certain chapters and aiding me with valuable suggestions.

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THE RISE OF MODERN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

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BOOK I

DISINTEGRATION

THE Protestant Reformation resulted in course of time in the formation of systems of theology as elaborate and scholastic as the Roman Catholic. While the authority of Pope and Council was rejected, the new systems were, to all intents and purposes, as binding on the Christian conscience as the old had been. The Bible, not the Church, was now theoretically supreme, but the Bible was supposed to have found its adequate and final interpretation in the symbolical books of the Reformation, and of these the theologians were the recognized exponents. Saving faith, it was generally believed, involved the acceptance of the whole Christian revelation, and as faith was made the only condition of salvation, orthodoxy acquired an even more prominent place in Protestantism than in Catholicism, where good works were regarded as equally important.

In the late sixteenth century, and throughout a considerable part of the seventeenth, scholastic ortho-

doxy was in control in most parts of the Protestant world. The great aim of the Reformation, it was agreed, had been the purification of doctrine, and unless its doctrine were pure, no church could claim to be a true church of Christ. Nervous concern for their own soundness in the faith was for long a leading characteristic of most Protestant communions. Intolerance was even more general and more bitter than in Roman Catholicism, for there was not the same consciousness of strength in the divided churches of the Reformation as in the one great body of the Middle Ages. Intellectual agreement, covering often the smallest minutiæ of doctrine, was made the principal, often the sole, ground of fellowship. New sects arose upon the basis of disparate interpretations of all sorts of matters, and the salvation of those of other views was almost everywhere denied.

But the various Protestant systems, with all their differences in detail, were identical in their main features, for they were the fruit of one great movement and were conscious of a common opposition to Roman Catholicism. The salient fact in the situation was not the existence of numerous and alien Protestant theologies, but of a common Protestant theology, essentially one in spite of all differences in detail and in spite of all disagreements between the sects. The salient fact in the situation, indeed, was not merely the oneness of Protestant theology, but the oneness of Christian theology, both Protestant and Catholic, for in most of their essential features Protestantism and Roman Catholicism were still identical.

Though the Reformers broke with the old church and substituted a new doctrine of the nature and means of salvation and the place of the church for the Roman Catholic doctrine, they retained the greater part of the traditional theology. The historic doctrine of the Trinity—three persons in one substance; the creation of the world out of nothing in six days by the power of the Almighty; the original perfection of Adam and his subsequent fall, entailing upon all his descendants the burden of sin and making them subject not merely to physical death but also to punishment in a future life beyond the grave; the existence of hell as a place of everlasting torment and heaven as a place of everlasting bliss; the need of a supernatural redemption to free men from the eternal consequences of their sin, both original and actual; the provision of this redemption by Jesus Christ who was both God and man—two natures in one person—and who was born of a virgin, suffered, and died that the wrath of God might be appeased and men be saved, and who rose again from the dead; the requirement of repentance and faith in Christ in order to attain salvation; the necessity of a supernatural revelation of God's will and truth that the way of life might be known, and of divine help that being known it could be followed; the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible; the supernatural origin, preservation, and guidance of the Church; the appointment of the sacraments as means of divine grace—all this and more was believed both by Catholics and Protestants, and it is this common body of theology that consti-

tutes the main substance of historic orthodoxy and is to be contrasted with the modern religious ideas whose rise I am to trace in this volume. Everywhere dominant within the principal Protestant communions of the seventeenth century, this old orthodoxy gradually suffered disintegration, and is to-day widely, and in greater or less part, discredited within those very communions. The forces making for its disintegration were many and various. The most important of them demand brief consideration.

CHAPTER I

PIETISM

In the latter part of the seventeenth century Philip Jacob Spener, a pastor in Frankfort on the Main, distressed by the prevailing irreligion of his day, began a practical religious work out of which grew the great movement known as German pietism. The principles upon which Spener built were not new—they had long existed, both in Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism—but he gave them a currency which they had not before enjoyed, and they became ultimately all-controlling in the religious life of Germany. In the over-emphasis of theology and in the widespread identification of saving faith with orthodoxy, Spener saw one of the principal causes of the decline in religion and morality. True piety had been too largely lost sight of, and the practical duties of the Christian life. There was needed above all a revival of personal religion in the form of deeper spirituality and greater devotion. Spener had no quarrel with Protestant orthodoxy, and attacked none of the doctrines of the traditional Lutheran system, but his attitude, nevertheless, was wholly different from that of his theological contemporaries. To them purity in the faith meant everything—the guarding of the deposit of truth

handed down by the Apostles and after centuries of corruption recovered and reformulated in the Confessions of the Reformation. To him the religious life of the individual Christian seemed most important—his regeneration by the Holy Spirit, his union with Christ, his sanctification through the indwelling Divine.

The movement was a protest of individualism against institutionalism and in this respect one in spirit with the Reformation itself. Conformity to an external standard, submission to an external authority, unquestioning acceptance of a given system of truth, attendance upon public religious services, and participation in established rites—all this was not enough. There must be the personal experience of conversion and the personal devotion of the heart and life to Christ. Religion, according to Spener, is an individual; not merely a corporate, matter, and in some degree at least every true Christian must have an independent religious life of his own, a life of direct communion with Christ, not dependent upon the ministrations of a priest or the mediation of the Church.

The movement was also an assertion of the religious rights and responsibilities of the laity. A fundamental principle of Spener's was the universal priesthood of believers, involving the duty of mutual instruction, inspiration, and reproof. This principle he put into practical operation by starting meetings among the laity for the devotional study of the Bible and for prayer and spiritual edification. These meetings mul-

tiplied rapidly and proved a most effective means for the reformation of the religious life and for the spread of the pietistic movement. Through them the laity were trained in self-expression, and their sense of religious responsibility was vastly enhanced. Without doubt they did much to undermine the dominance of theologians and the control of speculative theology in the churches of Germany. In all of them the study of the Bible, not for doctrinal, but for devotional purposes, was made a fundamental matter, and the tendency was to foster a practical and undogmatic Christianity wholly unlike the official Christianity of the scholastic period.

One result of pietism's change of interest from dogma to life was the rapid growth of the spirit of tolerance for other views and other sects. Spener felt more at one with Christians of pietistic tendencies in other communions than with those of another spirit in his own. In the Reformed churches and even in Roman Catholicism he recognized that the experience of regeneration and union with Christ was common, and it meant much more to him than the possession of an orthodox system of theology. Of the unconverted and worldly-minded he was not tolerant; with them the true Christian could have no communion, even though they were members of the same Church. But true children of God, wherever found, were bound together by a common spirit. Thus pietism was disintegrating, not only of the traditional system of theology, but of existing ecclesiastical institutions as well.

Pietism affected the traditional theology and pro-

moted its disintegration not simply by bringing about a general change of emphasis from doctrine to life, but also by drawing a distinction between important and unimportant doctrines, thus tending to reduce the traditional system to low terms. As has been said, Spener rejected no part of the orthodox faith, but he recognized as essential only those beliefs which promoted personal piety or had a direct bearing upon the Christian life. This, too, meant a radical change of attitude. Saving faith had been generally identified with, or at least made to include as an essential element, the acceptance of the whole orthodox system. Whatever the relation of any particular doctrine to practical life and conduct, as a part of the revealed truth of God it must be believed if one would be saved. It was necessary to accept it not because it appealed to a man, or affected his life and character, but because it had been revealed. To treat it as unimportant or as a matter of indifference was to show contempt for God from whom it came. The principle was identical with the Roman Catholic which made obedience to the Church in all matters of faith as well as practice essential to salvation. From the point of view of Protestant orthodoxy, as well as Catholic, to distinguish between essential and unessential doctrines is a fatal error. But this is exactly what pietism did. While not denying or questioning any part of the traditional system, it deliberately put certain doctrines into the forefront and made the acceptance of them alone necessary. The truth of the doctrines of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit every

Christian must experience for himself. All doctrines which he could not thus experience and which by their very nature stood apart from his daily life he could afford to forget.

Of course, however sound in the faith Spener might remain and however active he might be in religious work, his principles must be anathema both to the orthodox theologians and to the ruling ecclesiastics of his day. A bitter controversy speedily broke out which ended in a complete victory for pietism, and for half a century it remained the dominant force in German religious life.

The effect of pietism upon the old dogmatic system was disintegrating but not wholly destructive. As a matter of fact, while many doctrines were pushed by it into the background and permanently lost interest for most Protestant Christians, and while the general attitude toward dogmatic theology was changed, certain articles of the old faith were given a new hold upon the Protestant world. Just because the practical bearing of a doctrine was made the test of its importance those doctrines which were wrapped up in the pietistic interpretation of the Christian life, and were inseparable from it, acquired a value they had not had before, and when rationalism came upon the scene, with its negation of these very doctrines, they were made the heart of a new orthodoxy which continues to the present day largely unconscious of the difference between itself and the older orthodoxy which it has displaced, in fact much more akin to that older orthodoxy than the original relation between

pietism and scholasticism might lead us to expect. But of this later. Here I am concerned with pietism only as a disintegrating force. As such its work was twofold. It undermined respect for dogmatic theology in general, turning men's attention from orthodoxy to life; and it reduced the traditional system to comparatively low terms by distinguishing its essential from its unessential tenets.

CHAPTER II

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

THE period of the Enlightenment witnessed a general change of the widest range and deepest significance in the temper and attitude of the peoples of Northern and Western Europe. Tendencies already at work in the age of the Renaissance, after being checked for some generations by the Protestant Reformation and the religious wars which followed, became everywhere dominant in the eighteenth century, commonly known as the century of the Enlightenment, and the whole world of thought and culture was transformed. The humility, the self-distrust, the dependence upon supernatural powers, the submission to external authority, the subordination of time to eternity and of fact to symbol, the conviction of the insignificance and meanness of the present life, the somber sense of the sin of man and the evil of the world, the static interpretation of reality, the passive acceptance of existing conditions and the belief that amelioration can come only in another world beyond the grave, the dualism between God and man, heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, the ascetic renunciation of the world and its pleasures—all of which characterized the Middle Ages—were widely overcome, and

men faced life with a new confidence in themselves, with a new recognition of human power and achievement, with a new appreciation of present values, and with a new conviction of the onward progress of the race in past and future.

The fast multiplying discoveries of physical science and the ever advancing conquest of the forces of nature gave them a growing sense of mastery over their environment, while the promise of ever new secrets to be disclosed and ever new victories to be achieved made the world far more interesting than it had once been and endowed it with a new fascination for serious and thoughtful minded men. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and Francis Bacon's *Atlantis* were early illustrations of the new attitude. The latter, particularly, with its picture of the great improvements to be effected by mechanical contrivances of all sorts, was prophetic of a frame of mind that has become increasingly common in more recent generations. The present world appealed to men, not simply for what it was but for what it was becoming. The idea of indefinite progress, the confident expectation of a continuous advance in human culture and a continuous betterment of the conditions of earthly life, laid hold of the imagination and kindled the enthusiasm of an ever enlarging circle.

As time passed it became more and more common not simply to expect progress but to labor to promote it. Discontent with existing conditions of one sort and another increasingly took the form of agitation, rather than resignation, until finally the man who

tamely and piously submitted to industrial oppression or economic injustice, consoling himself and his neighbors with the picture of a future life where all would be well, became an object not of admiration, as he would once have been, but of contempt. The active virtues gradually crowded the passive into the background, and the latter lost their glamour even for religious-minded men.

The fruits of the spirit of the Enlightenment, which has thus been hastily characterized, were seen in every sphere—political, social, economic, industrial, scientific, philosophical, ethical, and religious. In some the effects were more marked than in others and the changes more rapid. In some transformation was already complete in the eighteenth century, in others it is hardly yet under way. The period of the Enlightenment specifically so-called is long since over, but the world is still living under the control of some of its ideals, others it has not yet attained to, while still others it has already transcended.

In the political sphere the Enlightenment promoted constitutionalism, laid the foundations of democracy, undermined belief in the supernatural origin of the State and the divine right of kings, and destroyed the theocratic ideas of the Middle Ages and early Protestantism. Institutionalism gave way to individualism in every line, and reverence for the great political, social, and religious institutions of the past rapidly waned. The theory of natural rights, carried to hitherto unheard of lengths, was accepted as axiomatic. Developing industry and commerce completed

the destruction of feudalism and contributed to economic freedom and to the disappearance of time-honored social distinctions.

Culture was becoming largely secular. Intellectual leadership was passing from the clergy to the laity, and education from the Church to the State. That morality should be divorced from theology and acquire an independent value of its own was almost inevitable. As was natural in an age when the worth of the individual human life was emphasized above all else, when ecclesiasticism and theological ethics were at a discount, and when reaction against party strife was widespread, benevolence, or regard for the good of others, came to be regarded as the supreme virtue. The notion of the universal brotherhood of man grew more and more common, and though it led to practical philanthropy on a large scale only in the nineteenth century, it had wide influence already in the eighteenth in abating cruelty, race hatred, class antagonism, and religious intolerance, and in fostering humanitarian ideals. Everywhere a milder, more humane, and more cosmopolitan spirit was making headway, at any rate among the educated classes. Underlying the whole movement was a new appreciation of present values, a new trust in man, and a new interest in human life.

In philosophy rationalism, beginning with Descartes, and sensationalism and empiricism, beginning with Hobbes and Locke, took the place of the old theological method. Both meant a revolt against the authoritarianism of the Middle Ages in the interest of the thinking and perceiving individual. In the one case

truth was to be known by its clearness and self-consistency rather than by the testimony of tradition and revelation. In the other case it was to be discovered by reflection upon the facts given in sense perception. The human reason, whether as a faculty of forming clear ideas or of drawing conclusions from the data of experience, became the supreme court of appeal, and the notion that a thing could be true and not rational from the human point of view was regarded as a scandal. The reason to which appeal was made, as time passed, came to be regarded more and more as the common sense of the mass of men. With their confidence in the individual, thinkers believed in sharing their philosophy, like everything else, with the people at large, and abhorred all esotericism and mystery. A privileged class seemed as much out of place in the intellectual realm as in the religious or political, and popularization was carried on in every line on a scale never before seen.

In the religious sphere—our particular concern here—the effects of the Enlightenment were very great. The old theological system still existed but little modified by the Protestant Reformation. The Enlightenment brought it into widespread discredit and seriously weakened, where it did not altogether destroy, its hold upon thinking men. And with the old theology Christianity itself suffered a reverse and seemed for a time about to perish from the earth. The secret of the trouble lay in the fact that the traditional Christian system was framed in an age whose intellectual atmos-

phere was vastly different from that of the period of the Enlightenment.

The latter is commonly called the age of rationalism, as if in it alone human reason was applied to the investigation and consideration of Christian truth. As a matter of fact there have been few periods of Christian history when the human reason was not so employed. In the early centuries the Patristic theologians, who did most to frame the historic Christian system, made use of the intellectual principles and methods commonly current in their day. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the golden age of Catholic orthodoxy, the application of reason to religion reached its zenith, and Christianity was subjected to a scrutiny of the most minute and exhaustive character. But in the Middle Ages as a rule the intellectual atmosphere and the rational principles generally accepted by thinking men were to all intents and purposes identical with those prevailing when the historic system was framed, and so the application of reason to religion meant the confirmation, not the criticism, of the old. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the age of nominalism, reason and religion were divorced, and the latter was accepted, despite its admitted irrationality, by Occam and the later schoolmen on the authority of the Church, by the Protestant reformers on the authority of Scripture. Luther even denounced the reason and gloried in proclaiming the disharmony between the Christian gospel and the mind of the natural man.

But those who came after him soon began to feel

the need of rationalizing the new system as the old had been, and the consequence was the scholastic period in Protestantism which lasted for a full century. As compared with that of the Middle Ages, Protestant scholasticism had the great disadvantage of being out of line with the prevailing intellectual currents of the day. As a result it was from the beginning a narrower, more inhospitable, and intolerant thing than its Catholic prototype, and its downfall was the more speedy and complete. From the point of view of its partisans it was a thoroughly rational system, based to be sure in considerable part upon revelation, but according throughout with the principles of human reason as they understood them.

What happened in the period of the Enlightenment was not that reason then first began to be applied to Christianity, but that reason was differently interpreted. The intellectual atmosphere of the Enlightenment—its general spirit and attitude—was utterly unlike that of the Middle Ages and of Protestant scholasticism. As a result demands were made upon the traditional theological system which it could not meet. That it was radically out of harmony with the new way of looking at things speedily appeared, and the only alternative was to transform it or to reject it, to adjust it to the modern world or to abandon it as forever outgrown. In the late Middle Ages, when the leading thinkers were all Catholic theologians and for the most part monks, the situation had been saved by recourse to the figment of the double truth. The still unquestioned authority of the Roman Church

was then great enough to support faith in the irrational. But in the seventeenth century, the period of a rapidly growing lay culture, when the long conflict of the sects had undermined confidence in all ecclesiastical authority, such recourse was an impossibility for most thinking men. And so began the age of rationalism so-called, when the application of reason to religion resulted in the criticism and repudiation of the old faiths, not, as so often in the past, in their confirmation. In other words the age of rationalism was not, as distinguished from other periods, the age of reason, but of the conflict of the new reason with the old.

The emergence of such a conflict always raises the question of authority. So long as the past and present are in harmony there is no dispute over the matter. By common consent reason and revelation are taken to be mutually confirmatory. But when the intellectual atmosphere changes, the supporters of the old system, unable to appeal longer to rational principles of common acceptance, are likely to substitute authority for reason and to maintain, not the unwisdom of the present as compared with the past, but the unwisdom of all reason as compared with revelation. To fortify the old faith, appeal is taken to the supernatural, and it is thus removed from the dangerous arena of rational consideration and discussion. It depends then upon how far the age has traveled from the old, whether revelation, the truth once deemed rational, shall be regarded as merely above reason or as contradictory thereto. In the

former case those who retain the old system may still accord reason a large place in the religious realm, and may recognize its instrumental if not its normative or critical function; in the latter case it will inevitably be denounced as having no place therein.

A fundamental tenet of the traditional Christian system, both Catholic and Protestant, was the fall of Adam, resulting in the depravity of the whole human race and its inability to save itself from the consequences of its sin. With this was bound up the belief in Christianity as a supernatural redemption, in Christ as a divine Saviour, in the Church as the sole ark of salvation, and in the sacraments as indispensable means of grace. With all this, as with the doctrine underlying it, the spirit of the Enlightenment was largely out of sympathy. A controlling principle of the new age was the worth and ability of man, a controlling ideal his independence and self-reliance. It was inevitable that two so widely different points of view should come into speedy conflict. In Socinianism, in Arminianism, in seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalism, opposition to the old appeared in varying forms and degrees. Sometimes it meant only a slight revision of the existing system—the opposition being neither thoroughgoing nor consistent—sometimes it meant its complete transformation or rejection. Always the doctrine of the fall was minimized, or its scope narrowed, and its effect upon the nature and character of man reduced to low terms. This meant of course a growing loss of emphasis upon those doctrines which were bound up with it. If man was not as helpless as had

been supposed, his need of supernatural redemption and supernatural power was less imperative. Already by the Socinians of the sixteenth century we find the function of Christianity reduced to the revelation of truth in order that man may know the way of life which, once known, it is wholly within his power to follow. This estimate of Christianity prevailed more and more widely among the rationalists. The gospel ceased to mean supernatural power given from above and came to mean only supernatural light.

But it was natural that the question should be raised, Why is supernatural light needed? If man has inherent power to follow the way of life, why may he not also discover it for himself? The Socinians replied in good traditional fashion: "So glorious a recompense and the sure means of obtaining it must wholly depend on the will and counsel of God. But this will and counsel what human being can explore and clearly ascertain, unless they be revealed by God himself?" [1] In other words God demands of man something else than mere natural virtue, or righteousness grounded in the nature of things. But it was inevitable in the period of the Enlightenment that there should be a growing number to whom this generally accepted position seemed wholly vicious, and by the so-called deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was vigorously attacked. The belief that God requires, whether in faith or conduct, anything arbitrary or morally indifferent, interferes, so they claimed, with the practice of true virtue, and has

[1] *Racovian Catechism*, Sec. II, Chapter I.

been productive of all sorts of evils, including intolerance and persecution.

This left for religion no other function than to promote natural morality by giving it the support of divine authority. Man knows his duty, but he needs to be incited to its performance by a recognition of it as the will of God, who in a world to come will reward the obedient and punish the disobedient. But for this it seemed to the deists that no supernatural revelation was needed, for the belief in God, in virtue as his will, and in future rewards and punishments, existed quite independently of revelation, constituting the tenets of an alleged natural religion supposed to be discoverable by the natural reason and to be known to all peoples. Some of them consequently rejected Christianity altogether. Others, distinguishing the Christianity of Jesus from the historic Christian system, declared the former to be identical with the religion of nature and recognized Jesus as a true prophet of the common faith in God, virtue, and immortality.

As to the place of religion, there was general agreement between the deists and the orthodox theologians who opposed them. Even those who believed that Christianity was a divine revelation and that it inculcated duties in themselves morally indifferent, recognized the promotion of virtue as its great end and saw in all its requirements only means thereto. At one upon this point, their differences were of minor importance. The fact of historic significance is not the divergence of view between deists and Christian apologists, but their acceptance of common intellectual

principles and their reading of religion in the light of them.

One effect of the Enlightenment, as has been seen, was to minimize many of the doctrines of historic Christianity and to reduce the system to low terms. In this respect it was similar to pietism, but the simplification proceeded on altogether different principles. In the one case the doctrines rooted in Christian experience, particularly the experience of conversion and regeneration, were emphasized; in the other those most closely allied to the tenets of natural religion—monotheism, virtue, and immortality. It is directly due to the influence of the Enlightenment that such tenets as these are still widely recognized outside of evangelical circles as the heart of Christianity and all else as unimportant in comparison therewith.

The influence of the Enlightenment was not exhausted in the reduction of Christianity to low terms, or even in the complete rejection of all supernatural revelation. Many went still further and repudiated the religion of nature itself, finding it unnecessary and irrational. It was inevitable that when religion was regarded as a mere means to morality the more the principle of human ability was emphasized the less need there must seem of religion. Man might well appear sufficient unto himself in this matter as in all others and hence able to dispense with religious faith. Particularly the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, which constituted an essential tenet of both revealed and natural religion as currently understood, was out of place from the point of view

of a consistent believer in human ability and autonomy, for it implied that man is naturally evil rather than good and needs extraneous supports if he is to be kept virtuous.. As a result of the interpretation of the future life in terms of reward and punishment, which prevailed so generally in the age of the Enlightenment, the doctrine of immortality itself fell ultimately into widespread disrepute, from which, it may be remarked, it has not yet wholly recovered.

When with the conviction of the superfluity of all religion, natural as well as revealed, was associated doubt as to the demonstrability of its tenets, there was nothing left but to reject religion altogether. The result was scepticism, going on often to dogmatic atheism.

Thus the Enlightenment bore fruit in the disintegration not only of the traditional Christian system but also of the simpler Christianity of Christ himself and in many cases of all religious faith whatsoever. Unless religion had some other function than the mere promotion of virtue, unless it offered something else than a crutch to the lame or an aid to the weak, there was apparently no place for it more.

CHAPTER III

NATURAL SCIENCE

THE attitude of the Christian fathers toward the physical universe and its phenomena was controlled by two considerations, both of which have ceased in modern days to influence the minds of thinking men. In the first place they were so exclusively interested in spiritual and eternal things that the world of sense and time seemed wholly unworthy of study. In this estimate they were not alone. Already long before the beginning of the Christian era, especially under the influence of the later Platonism, a growing interest in the ideal and spiritual and a growing contempt for external fact marked the thinking of the day. Observation was at a discount, and symbolism and allegory alone seemed attractive. With this contempt for mere fact was joined a more or less extreme asceticism, based not so much upon the conviction of the essential evil of matter as upon the persuasion of its impermanence and relative worthlessness. Into this heritage the early fathers entered, and the common tendency reached in them its highest development under the influence of their overmastering sense of the nearness and eternal glories of the future life. Only spiritual matters were thought worthy the attention of the Christian, and to spend his time upon things which had

no relation to the soul's salvation was to sin grievously. The words of the third century father Arnobius expressed the common Christian sentiment of his own and subsequent centuries: "Leave these things to God. . . . Your reasons are not free to involve you in such questions, and vainly to bother about matters so remote. Your interests are in jeopardy—I mean the salvation of your souls." [1]

The fathers recognized that there might be two advantages in the study of the world in which we live—to discover the glory of God revealed in his handiwork, and to elucidate the teaching of Scripture. And so some of them, as for instance Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, and Isidore of Seville, wrote books upon the creation of the world and upon one or another aspect of the physical universe. But their descriptions of external phenomena were based not so much upon observation as upon the statements of the Bible, or were at any rate made to conform with and illustrate those statements. And this brings us to the second consideration which controlled the attitude of the Christian fathers toward the physical universe. They accepted the Bible as a divine book and believed that it contained an infallible and authoritative account of the world and its phenomena. "That Scripture," Augustine declares, "which proves the truth of its historical statements by the fulfillment of its prophecies, gives no false information." [2]

[1] *Adversus Nationes*, II, 61.

[2] *De Civitate Dei*, Book XVI, Chapter 9. Cf. also *De Genesi ad Litteram*, Book II, Chapter 5.

For more than a thousand years this principle controlled the thought of the Church. During the greater part of the Middle Ages to be learned in science meant above all to be learned in the sacred text, in its accounts of the origin of the universe and in its descriptions of natural phenomena and of animal and vegetable life. The scientific text-books of the age were based upon the Bible, at least in considerable part, and Biblical ideas of astronomy, physics, geography, zoölogy and the like were handed down unchanged from generation to generation.

But this meant that the Christian world of the Middle Ages was held in bondage to views of nature far less enlightened even than those of the classical world, for the Biblical writers reproduced for the most part traditions of ancient Chaldæa and Babylonia rather than the results of the more intelligent study of nature and history carried on among the Greeks. The earth, for instance, was commonly thought of as a flat oblong surface surrounded by the sea, the whole enclosed by four immense walls which sustained the firmament, or vault of the heavens, which in turn supported a vast store of water. In the lower part of this box-like structure lived men and animals; in the upper part the angels and other heavenly beings. The sun, moon, and stars were suspended from the firmament to light the earth and were moved to and fro by the angels who also had the office of opening the windows of heaven to water the earth from the floods above. It was upon this primitive topography of the universe that Christian ideas of a localized heaven and hell

were chiefly based—ideas that had perhaps as much as anything else to do with the long continued reluctance of the mass of men to accept the Copernican astronomy when it was broached in the sixteenth century.

Although the picture which has been described was generally accepted in the ancient Church, the spherical view of the earth, taught by the Pythagoreans, by Plato, Aristotle, and other Greeks, also found more or less hesitating acceptance here and there among the fathers, and in the Middle Ages established itself in the minds of Thomas Aquinas and other schoolmen who made the Ptolemaic astronomy virtually official in the West. The Bible was reinterpreted in such a way as to give its support to this theory which was made part of a vast cosmico-theological system. The earth is at the center of the universe; around it all the heavenly bodies revolve; for its sake they exist, as it exists for the sake of man, whose redemption and growth in grace are the chief end of the whole creation. But even where the primitive notion was abandoned and the spherical view of the earth accepted, the antipodes were long denied, both on rational grounds, for it seemed absurd to think of men walking with heads downward, and also and particularly on Biblical grounds, for the Apostles had preached the gospel to all the world in accordance with Christ's command, and yet they had certainly not preached to the antipodes. Moreover it would be impossible for men on the other side of the earth to

see and greet Christ descending at his second coming upon the clouds of heaven.

Whichever picture of the earth was accepted, it was everywhere believed that the universe was created out of nothing at a fixed period of time, commonly supposed to be about four thousand years before the coming of Christ; that all the species in the animal and vegetable kingdoms were then brought into existence in their present form; and that the whole human race has descended from a single pair. The account in Genesis was taken in the most literal fashion, and the order of events there depicted was supposed to have been revealed by the Holy Spirit and its acceptance to be binding upon the Christian conscience. Moreover, the constant activity of God was believed to be necessary to sustain the universe and keep it from lapsing again into nothingness. Infinite power, so it was thought, is needed to preserve as well as to create. The world is in God's hands, and he can do at any moment what he wills with it. All that happens is directly caused by him. He can follow regular ways of working, or he can depart altogether from established precedent and produce phenomena quite unlike anything known before and quite unconnected with what precedes and follows.

But God, so it was believed, was not the only spiritual being having to do with the physical universe. In spite of the theoretical monotheism of the Christian faith pagan influence continued to make itself felt, and the earth and the heavens were peopled with all sorts of spirits, good and bad, some of them carrying out

the behests of God, others opposing and striving to thwart his purposes in every possible way. Storms, floods, eclipses, comets, famine, and pestilence were supposed to be the work of evil demons, or they might be sent by God himself to punish the wicked or to chastise his own people. All natural phenomena were read in relation to man. The sun shone and the rain fell for his sake, and every unusual event was a portent for his instruction or warning.

Medicine was largely a supernatural science, exorcisms, charms, and incantations supplementing or even taking the place of natural remedies, so that medical science retrograded rather than advanced during the long centuries of the Middle Ages. It was not that men lacked the intelligence and skill which they have shown in other times, but that the belief in supernatural powers, superseding and setting at naught the ordinary forces of nature, lay like a pall upon the minds of cultured and ignorant alike. It was due to the same notion that ideas of evidence were so unlike those of to-day. The lot, the ordeal, the trial by battle—all sorts of methods for getting supernatural light—were resorted to, until the power of judging events and reasoning upon the basis of observed fact seems almost to have perished from the earth. The writings of fathers, schoolmen, and reformers reveal as profound insight, as close reasoning, and as keen logic as can be found in the greatest works of modern times, and yet they are disfigured with old wives' fables and with countless incredible tales. The truth is, they were so blind to the play of natural forces in the physi-

cal universe and so obsessed with the idea that the world is the abode of unseen and supernatural beings of all kinds that the unnatural explanation was often more congenial than the natural, and to believe the impossible was all too easy. This attitude, in an age when culture had made great advances in many lines, and when the childhood of the world was long since outgrown, was due in part to the overabsorption of the leaders of human thought in the affairs of a future world and another life, in part to the artificial and factitious support given to primitive notions by the belief in the Bible as an infallible authority in the sphere of science. So long as that interest was dominant, the impulse to make advances in the knowledge of things as they are was lacking; and so long as that belief prevailed, it was difficult for Christians to outgrow the intellectual atmosphere and the attitude toward the physical universe reflected in the Hebrew Scriptures.

What we may call the modern view of the world was a result, on the one hand, of the awakening of a new interest in the present world and the recognition of its independent value, and on the other hand of the substitution of observation and experiment for the age-long authority of the Bible, that is, the substitution of human self-confidence and self-reliance for complete dependence upon the supernatural. At both these points the attitude of the fathers was abandoned, and its abandonment alone made the scientific progress of modern times possible. The change was a very gradual one. In the later Middle Ages the interest

in nature was beginning to awaken, but the careful and systematic study of it was slow in following. Roger Bacon, in the thirteenth century, practiced the method of observation and experiment in a more or less haphazard fashion and with an unfortunate adherence to the traditional belief that the Scriptures contain the sum of all knowledge and that the chief end of all the sciences is to serve theology. Leonardo da Vinci, at the end of the fifteenth century, emphasized the same method of observation and experiment as indispensable, but only in the seventeenth was it employed on a large scale and generally recognized as alone legitimate in the sphere of science. In the latter century both Francis Bacon and Descartes insisted on banishing theology altogether from science and substituting mechanical for final causation in the explanation of all phenomena.

One result of the new study of nature with "the free mind" was a tremendous change in the views of the world handed down from the past. Systematic observation, instead of confirming, contradicted most of the things which had been believed for centuries. One after another traditional idea was shown to be erroneous, and gradually an entirely new picture took the place of the old. As a consequence the history of modern science was for a long time the history of a constant struggle between the old and the new, every fact of observation being established only after a protracted battle with existing prejudice, and in the present case unfortunately the prejudice was heightened by the belief that the old had the backing of divine au-

thority. In 1519 Magellan demonstrated the sphericity of the earth by actually circumnavigating it, but his demonstration, and particularly his reports of the existence of people on the other side of the globe, were long disbelieved because they contradicted time-honored interpretations of Scripture. The Copernican astronomy, first published to the world in 1543 and confirmed in the next century by the investigations and experiments of Kepler and Galileo, was still slower in securing acceptance. In this case not only were many Biblical passages flatly opposed to it, but it was beset with other serious religious difficulties. The whole cosmico-theological system elaborated with such care by the great medieval theologians was imperiled by it. If the earth was not the center of the universe, if it was simply one of a number of planets revolving around the sun, the old notions of heaven and hell became impossible, and the traditional Christian scheme, which made man the object and the earth the scene of the great drama of redemption, seemed discredited. As a matter of fact the surprising thing is not that Christians felt the inconsistency between the new science and the old theology, but that they were able to retain so much of the old after the new had fought its way to universal acceptance.

Again, the great expansion in the size of the universe, resulting from the labors of Galileo and other physicists and astronomers; the antiquity of man made evident by archeological discoveries begun in the seventeenth century and continued to our own day; and more recently the demonstration of the long ages

through which the world has been forming and life upon it developing—all these have proved successive shocks to traditional Christian belief. Of course, every change in existing opinion is bound to be received at first with incredulity, but in all these matters the readjustment might have taken place naturally and without harm to anybody, had it not been for the notion that the Bible is an infallible authority upon all subjects taken together with the fact that like most other ancient documents it represents a world-view which the new scientific discoveries were showing erroneous at one point after another.

As a consequence of this collocation of circumstances theologians and ecclesiastics almost uniformly opposed every advance in science as heretical and unchristian, and there thus began the conflict between religion and science which troubled the Church for many a generation. Even yet we hear the echoes of it now and then, but fortunately the battle itself is over. Some of us are old enough to remember the panic caused in Christian circles by the Darwinian theory of evolution, the fear of it on the part of multitudes of godly people, the savage attacks upon it by countless defenders of the faith, the reiterated assertions that Christianity and evolution are incompatible and cannot exist together. When we realize that this was but a repetition of what had been occurring at intervals for more than three hundred years, we can form some idea of what Christian faith has had to endure. The bodily suffering caused by the fire and sword of persecution is not always the worst kind of agony. Fear

for the safety of the ark of the Lord may often tear the pious heart as nothing else can. We can see now that Christians brought the conflict upon themselves. But it was none the less dreadful, and no one who has followed it carefully can regard it lightly or contemptuously. It is commonly spoken of as a conflict between religion and science. As a matter of fact it was rather a conflict between two diverse sciences, the one unfortunately supported by the Church and thus given a factitious basis which it never should have had. It was this that led to the unhappy impression, still widely prevalent even now when the old conflict is largely a thing of the past, that Christianity and science are by their very nature opposed to one another, an impression that has undermined all respect for religion in many quarters. Had the Church in the beginning frankly recognized that the Bible and the fathers teach an antiquated world-view, and frankly put itself on the side of scientific observation and experiment, the whole religious situation, both Catholic and Protestant, would be to-day far other than it is.

Still another result of the new study of nature was a belief in the operation of mechanical causation and the control of natural law throughout the physical universe. The belief, as a matter of fact, was the fruit both of scientific observation and of philosophical reflection. By the philosophers Descartes, Spinoza, Bacon, Cudworth, and many others, the principle of mechanical causation and uniform law was vigorously defended, and the labors of such scientists as Kepler, Galileo, and Newton raised it to the rank of a scientific

axiom. With his theory of universal gravitation operating everywhere according to a fixed formula, Newton particularly gave the finishing touch to the conception. It is true that the theory of law and the metaphysic of causation have undergone great changes in modern times. Whereas law was once thought of as a restraint imposed upon the universe from without and wielding an absolute power over nature, it is now thought of simply as our description of the behavior of phenomena. And whereas causation was once pictured as a bond existing between things, it is now widely represented simply as our interpretation of the relations of phenomena. But in spite of such changes of theory the general situation remains the same. Scientists proceed with confidence upon the assumption that certain consequences invariably follow certain antecedents, and that as the antecedents are altered, the consequences will also be. It is upon this assumption indeed that every investigator proceeds today. The assumption of course has not been proved universally valid and never can be, but it is the common assumption underlying all experiment and the presupposition upon which all modern science rests.

An inevitable result of the growing belief in the universality of mechanical causation and the uniformity of natural law was the gradual minimizing of supernatural activity. The habit steadily grew of seeking natural causes for all phenomena, however unusual, and the old resort to supernatural agency to explain strange and uncommon events was generally abandoned. It may often be impossible to discover

the forces at work and to predict with accuracy the effects which will follow. As a matter of fact the modern scientist is well aware that there are many things he cannot explain and that beyond the boundaries of his knowledge there lies a vast region of unexplored territory. The complacent and easy-going scepticism of the eighteenth century, which summarily denied everything it had not experienced or could not understand, is no longer his. He recognizes that the world is full of mysteries and possesses an inexhaustible fund of surprises. He may therefore be compelled frequently to enlarge his stock of natural forces and to revise his descriptions of the phenomenal world, but it does not occur to him to move over into another realm, and because the agencies with which he is acquainted do not account for the new fact to assume that it is supernatural. To call things supernatural indeed is no explanation of them according to the modern scientist, for to explain is simply to point out the natural connections between phenomena.

The general attitude described has become so instinctive and so much a part of our world-view that most of us never think of interpreting extraordinary any more than ordinary occurrences in other than a naturalistic way. Fairies, witches, ghosts, angels, and demons, once freely assumed to account for all sorts of phenomena, have simply dropped out of the mind of the average modern man and no longer play a part in his experience. Not that their existence has been disproved, but that they have become superfluous.

Another effect of the modern scientific attitude was

to push God back to the beginning of things and to regard his continued activity in the world as quite unnecessary.' Galileo's first law of motion enunciated in 1638 had wide influence in this connection: "Every body continues in its state of motion or of rest, unless acted upon by some opposing force." Hitherto it had been commonly believed that the power of God was needed not only to start the heavenly bodies upon their courses but also to keep them in motion. Newton still thought divine interference occasionally necessary to correct observed irregularities in their movements, but later it was shown that such irregularities corrected themselves and that Newton's assumption was therefore gratuitous. The steadily growing tendency, indeed, was to find ever less place for divine activity in connection with the conduct and control of the physical universe. It came to be more and more widely believed that in the beginning God had impressed upon the world the laws by which it was thenceforth to be governed and had then left it to run of itself.

Meanwhile many who shared in the general tendency to minimize the activity of God in the world yet recognized it in connection with the founding of Christianity. The greatness of the issues involved, so it was believed, justified in this particular case direct divine interference with the course of nature. In order to guarantee the divine origin of Christianity supernatural powers were bestowed upon the founders of the Church and miracles were wrought by them to authenticate their mission. The new world-view

made it much more difficult to believe in miracles than it had been in earlier days. In the ancient and medieval world they were commonly accepted as a matter of course. There was no reason why supernatural power should not be directly exerted at any time and place. But the modern attitude was inhospitable to such miraculous events, and their occurrence was widely denied. This, however, gave them all the greater evidential value if they were once admitted, and there now opened the classical period of Christian apologetics in which the truth of Christianity was proved wholly by prophecy and miracle, supernatural phenomena intended solely to give the Christian Faith the support of divine authority. By such philosophers as John Locke and Samuel Clarke, and by such theologians as Archbishop Tillotson, William Paley, and many others, the argument was elaborated and became the triumphant vindication of the divine claims of the Christian system.

The attack upon miracles, which naturally grew more and more active as the apologetic from them was increasingly emphasized, came curiously enough not chiefly from scientists but from men who were opposed to Christianity or were critics of it on other grounds altogether. The scientists of the period as a rule were too much engrossed in other things, or were too lacking in historic imagination, to concern themselves with the Biblical miracles and their implications. It is the growth of historic imagination in our own day that has done as much as anything else

to make the belief in Biblical miracles difficult to those who have long since ceased to believe in any others.

The attack upon miracles made it incumbent upon Christian apologists to defend them, and this they did in various ways, the argument for Christianity being pushed back from an argument for its truth based upon the miracles to an argument for the miracles themselves. Various lines of defense were adopted. It was claimed, as for instance in the eighteenth century by Paley, and in the nineteenth by Mozley, that man's need of a divine revelation and the impossibility of authenticating it in any way except by miracles raised a strong presumption in their favor. But the growing belief that divine power is more clearly revealed in order than in disorder, in law than in exceptions to it, gradually took the force out of this supposition.

Again it was contended, as for instance by Leibnitz in the seventeenth century and by Butler in the eighteenth, that miracles are manifestations of a higher law and hence entirely natural. But the difficulty with this contention was that the miracles themselves were the only evidence of such a higher law.

Still again it was claimed that Jesus was a supernatural being and hence might be expected to work miracles, or that Christianity is a supernatural system and therefore it might be anticipated that miracles would be wrought in connection with it. In other words, Christ and Christianity were now made to support the miracles instead of being sustained by them. This is a very common attitude among Christians to-

day. Few make miracles the principal basis of their faith, but multitudes accept unquestioningly the miracles recorded in the Bible because of their belief in the divine character of the Christian religion. The old apologetic basis has thus shifted completely. Whereas a century and more ago the miracles were means to faith, now they have become difficulties in the way of faith and the Christian apologist is obliged to defend them as elements in a system otherwise accredited instead of employing them in its support.

Still more common, or at any rate increasingly common to-day both within and without the Christian Church, is the tendency to believe that Jesus did wonderful things beyond the power of most men, but to interpret his deeds in a wholly natural way. This is an outgrowth of the rationalistic practice common in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of reducing all the miracles recorded in the New Testament to ordinary events and denuding them altogether of their extraordinary character.

This method has been justly discredited. Modern men, it is true, widely share the rationalistic belief that Jesus' deeds were wholly natural, but the limits of the natural have been vastly extended. Cultured minds of to-day are far more hospitable to accounts of extraordinary occurrences than were the intellectual classes of the eighteenth century. Telepathy, hypnotism, mind cure—the countless evidences of the influence of mind over body which modern psychology and medicine have gathered—make it quite possible to believe that Jesus did many of the wonderful deeds re-

corded of him by the use of means now at least partially understood, as they were not then, and so now interpreted naturally as they were once interpreted supernaturally. This represents a great advance upon the older rationalism, but it is no less fatal to the argument from miracles.

Thus Christian apologists have been driven successively from position to position and have been forced generally to abandon the contention upon which they staked everything in the eighteenth century.

Meanwhile the tendency referred to above to push God back to the beginning of things and to dispense with his activity in the universe since its creation did not stop there, but resulted quite naturally in scepticism and atheism. As evidences of supernatural intervention grew fewer, the question naturally suggested itself whether, if the universe be self-sustaining, it may not have been self-originating as well. In answer to this question theists appealed to the solar system, about which so much had been learned in recent generations, as the supreme evidence of the creative activity and adaptive intelligence of God. But by Kant and Laplace, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the nebular hypothesis was propounded, and was widely recognized as supplying a satisfactory explanation of the present form of the cosmos without recourse to supernatural agency; and though the faith of Christians may not have been generally affected, it became difficult for scientists to pin their belief in God upon the structure of the solar system.

There was still left support for belief in the super-

natural in the wonderful evidences of intelligent purpose displayed in the infinitely varied adaptations of the animal and vegetable world, and in the existence of the great multiplicity of species which could be accounted for only by independent creation. This line of argument, whose cogency was greatly strengthened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the rapidly increasing knowledge of the world of nature, was set forth in classical form in Paley's "Natural Theology," published in 1799, and a generation and more later in the famous Bridgewater treatises. Materialistic philosophy replied that matter itself is possessed of sufficient potency to account for all the facts, and the idea of evolution favored the same contention. Science finally came to the support of philosophical speculation through the discovery of actual transmutations of species under influences which might conceivably be universally operative. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection has not been established on any such scale as to justify the sweeping conclusions widely drawn from it, but it has at any rate served to destroy completely for multitudes of minds the cogency of the traditional theistic argument from design, and so has struck one more blow at the old view of the relation between nature and the supernatural. Belief in God is not impossible to those who accept the theory of evolution in its Darwinian or any other form. But it is evident that the positive reasons for believing in him drawn from the existence of multitudinous species and from the evidences of adaptation in the world of physical life have largely broken

down. If not atheism at least agnosticism is a not unnatural consequence. If one is not justified in denying the existence of God—at least one appears from this point of view to have lost all ground for asserting it.

Thus the modern view of the world, already current in the eighteenth century and growing more widely current ever since, had come to be such that God seemed unnecessary to explain the world. Step by step natural forces had been substituted for supernatural until there seemed no place left for God and no evidences of his activity anywhere. That faith in God has been widely lost because of this conviction of the self-sufficiency of the physical universe is apparent to everybody. Multitudes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and multitudes in our own day have ceased to believe in God just because they see no need of him to account for the visible world which is permeated with material energy and bound together by the iron bond of causal necessity. If this were the end of the story, it would be a lamentable tale indeed. If the net result of the scientific development of recent centuries were the permanent destruction of the world's faith in God, one might mourn the outcome and perhaps even venture to wish, vain though the wish were, that modern science had never been, and that the world could return to the old-fashioned faith of the fathers. But this is not the end of the story. The account that has been given of the negations of the modern age must be followed by an account of its affirmations. For but one aspect of the process of

thought has been sketched in this chapter. Only those forces have been exhibited which led to religious doubt and denial. It will be necessary also to show the influences which have made for faith and to trace the process of its recovery.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the realism of an earlier day had given way to nominalism, theologians found it impossible to prove the rationality of Christian dogma, as the great medieval schoolmen had done, and were forced to fall back upon the infallible authority of the Roman Church as the sole ground of faith. This, however, was not a permanently tenable position for thinking men, particularly when confidence in the Church's infallibility was undermined by the Protestant Reformation. Some other basis of assurance must be discovered.

The French philosopher Descartes found this basis in self-consciousness, and thus became the father of modern philosophical rationalism. In his search for certainty he began by doubting everything. One thing, however, remains certain, and that is the thinking self. I may doubt the existence of everything else, but I cannot doubt the existence of myself who doubts. In the very act of doubting my own existence is immediately given. From this absolute assurance of our own reality as thinking selves Descartes then derived a criterion by which we may test all reality. Whatever we know with the same clearness and distinctness

with which we know our own existence, we may rely upon as true. Descartes was a thoroughgoing rationalist, not a sceptic, and he believed that so long as the intellect is true to itself and accepts only what is perfectly clear and distinct, it cannot err. He began as a mathematician, and it was his ambition to introduce into philosophy the same clearness and self-evidence as marked the mathematical sciences. What we cannot prove with equal certainty cannot be relied upon as true. Complete certainty (and with less than this Descartes was not satisfied) can be attained by the method of deduction alone. Only as we start with some principle whose truth is axiomatic, and deduce from it the necessary consequences, as in mathematics, can we reach what we are seeking. The method of induction but piles phenomenon upon phenomenon with no way of guaranteeing us against the errors of the senses.

Some of our ideas are inborn; others, and the majority of them, have been drawn from experience or handed down to us by tradition. The inborn ideas are philosophically the most important, and only they can be relied upon because free from the corrupting influence of the senses on the one hand and of custom and prejudice on the other. Among our inborn ideas there is none clearer and more distinct than that of an infinite and perfect Being with whom we implicitly or explicitly contrast ourselves when we are conscious of our own finiteness and imperfection. This idea cannot be our own creation, nor arise out of our own experience or that of anyone else, for the effect cannot

be greater than the cause, and we are but finite while the idea is infinite. It must have come from an infinite Being and must have been implanted in us by him. Thus Descartes reaches the assurance that such a Being exists. This assurance he makes doubly sure by the use of Anselm's famous ontological argument. We have an idea of the most perfect of all beings. But existence is itself an attribute of perfection; a being who exists in reality is more perfect than the same being existing only in thought. Consequently the most perfect being of whom we think must exist; he cannot be thought of as non-existent. The ontological argument, whether in the hands of Descartes or of Anselm, is genuinely characteristic of philosophical rationalism which appears in it in purest form and with least admixture of empiricism.

The existence of a perfect being, the assurance of which is reached in the ways indicated, is then used by Descartes to guarantee the reality of an external world. We cannot be immediately certain of the existence of such a world or even of our own bodies, for our senses may deceive us, as they often do, for instance in dreams, or an evil demon may take delight in giving us our impressions of an outer world when nothing of the kind exists. But if there be a perfect being, God, who has given us an idea of himself, we may be assured that our idea of an external world, which is common to all the race, cannot be wholly false. His truthfulness forbids the assumption that he can deceive us all or permit us all to be deceived in such a matter. Our senses may play us

false in many ways; sense perception is not the sure road to truth that pure thought is; and so we may assign to objects many qualities which they do not really possess. But when we have abstracted color, sound, taste, smell, and all that may conceivably have been contributed by the senses, there remains one necessary quality, namely extension, which cannot even be thought away from bodies without annihilating them. This, then, is the essential quality of bodies, as thought, which for Descartes included feeling and willing, is the essential quality of minds.

The infinite being Descartes called substance, defining substance as that which depends upon nothing else for its existence. Mind and matter are substances in a subordinate sense in that they need nothing but God that they may exist. They depend for their reality neither upon each other nor upon anything else save God. They are entirely independent of one another and wholly unlike in nature. They cannot affect or influence or communicate with each other except through God, who created them both. In his natural philosophy Descartes gave a purely mechanical account of the physical universe. Teleological explanations have no place in connection with it; it must be conceived as controlled wholly by mechanical laws. Mind on the other hand he represented in an entirely different way as free and independent of all mechanical causation.

To Descartes's greatest disciple, Spinoza, the existence of God was the one sure thing, the starting point of all his thinking. He was filled with all the mys-

tic's love of God and dominated by the reality of his being. He therefore had no need of seeking proofs of God's existence as Descartes had, but he took over from Descartes his definition of substance and also his method of mathematical deduction. Interpreting the former strictly, he reached the conclusion that there is but one substance in the universe, but one being, God, which needs nothing else for its existence, and of this thought and extension are but attributes. The mathematical method he then employed in order to deduce from the one substance all reality. As all things have come out of the being of God, by strict deduction we may pass from the idea of God to the ideas of all things, for all of them must be included therein. The attributes of thought and extension are independent but completely parallel to each other. By the same necessity by which one individual or mode of existence follows another within the sphere of matter the individuals follow each other within the sphere of mind. The same complete determinism controls them both. There is no more freedom in the world of spirit than in that of nature. Nor is there room for the exercise of freedom in God. All things follow of necessity from the nature of the infinite substance. The world is not the result of a free creative act on God's part. It is involved in the very nature of God as the angles of a triangle are involved in the nature of a triangle. All teleological explanations of the spiritual and ethical world, as well as of the material, are therefore entirely out of place.

In the system of Spinoza the method of mathemati-

cal deduction found its most rigorous application within the metaphysical and ethical spheres, and philosophical rationalism its most consistent and extreme expression.

Spinoza's younger contemporary, the German philosopher and statesman Leibnitz, developed Descartes's rationalism along altogether different lines. While Spinoza was the extremest of monists, Leibnitz was a thoroughgoing pluralist, assuming an infinite number of independent substances, or monads, which make up the world of nature and spirit. Like Descartes and Spinoza, Leibnitz was a genuine rationalist, but he felt the influence also of empiricism, and in his religious philosophy he employed both *a priori* and empirical proofs of the divine existence. In addition to the ontological argument of Anselm and Descartes, he appealed also to the cosmological argument from contingent to necessary being. A necessary being is that which has the ground of its existence in itself; a contingent being has the ground of its existence in another. If anything exists, there must be something which exists necessarily, or which has the ground of existence in itself alone; otherwise we are left with an infinite regress from contingent being to contingent being, each of which points us to another in explanation of its own existence. But the most compelling evidence for God Leibnitz found in the preëstablished harmony, whereby the innumerable independent monads are assigned each his particular place in the universe and form a harmonious system of coöperating forces. Such a preëstablished harmony, which con-

stituted one of the fundamental tenets of Leibnitz's philosophy, was conceivable only if due ultimately to an infinitely wise being, or God.

Ferdinand Christian Wolff, the systematizer and popularizer of Leibnitz's philosophy, carried the combination of rationalism and empiricism still further. He lost sight of some of Leibnitz's most profound ideas, and the dogmatic system which he elaborated in great detail and with extraordinary diligence was relatively a superficial and barren affair, but his influence was tremendous, and the Leibnitz-Wolffian philosophy, as it was called, was completely dominant in Germany until shattered by the criticism of Kant.

Wolff, too, was a Cartesian rationalist, believing that certainty can be attained only by the method of deduction, but he made a large place for empiricism in teaching that what the reason proves with absolute assurance touching the phenomenal world the senses discover independently by immediate perception. The task of philosophy is to show the logical necessity of the given facts and so to supply a rational explanation of them. Wolff's great aim was clearness and intelligibility. Philosophy must reach distinct and definite conclusions. Nothing is to be accepted as true unless it can be demonstrated as necessary in the very nature of things, or unless we can discover a sufficient ground for it in observed facts. Philosophy has to do with the whole realm of the possible, but within this realm only that is real which can be clearly shown to be such. The understanding is the only road

to truth. Not instinct, or intuition, or faith is to be relied upon, but syllogistic reasoning proceeding in orderly fashion from premise to conclusion.

In his religious philosophy, or natural religion, Wolff reproduced the ontological and cosmological proofs of the divine existence, laying particular stress in connection with the latter upon the fact that the world, composed of countless diverse elements as it is, and in a constant process of change, cannot have the ground of its existence in itself, but only in another. And he claimed even greater cogency for both these proofs than Leibnitz had done, for they show the existence of God to be a necessary truth of the reason.

He also added the teleological or physico-theological argument, according to which the countless evidences of adaptation and design in the world point to an intelligent creator. This line of argument was especially popular in England, where the empiric method was in control. Like many English theologians of his own and later days, Wolff carried the argument to ridiculous lengths, endeavoring to show how everything was created by God for some particular purpose, commonly for the good of man and to promote his development.[1]

The earth was made as it is in order that it might be inhabited. In it "man finds everything he needs for nourishment, clothing, and shelter, for science and

[1] In his *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Absichten der natürlichen Dinge* (1723).

art, and for the performance of his moral and political duties." [1] And as the earth was made by God that it might be inhabited by men and beasts, we may easily guess that he has in like manner prepared the other planets for their dwelling places." [2] The sun shines that man may be able to do his work more easily and cheaply than would be possible in the darkness. "Whoever would fully realize this advantage brought us by the sun may think how it would be if even for a single month it were night and not day. He will then be sufficiently convinced by his own experience, particularly if he has much to do on the street or in the fields." [3]

The planets are far apart that they may not throw each other into shadow and thus prevent their receiving adequate light and heat, and for this reason the larger they are the more widely they are separated.[4] Although storms do great damage they were not intended for this purpose alone, but also to cool and purify the air we breathe; [5] and water was made chiefly that it might serve as a drink for men and beasts. "Though men make artificial drinks they cannot do without water. Beer is brewed from water and malt, and it is the water that quenches the thirst. Wine which is prepared from grapes could not have grown without water, and it is the same with the

[1] Ibid., second edition (1726), p. 97.
[2] Ibid., p. 98.
[3] Ibid., p. 75.
[4] Ibid., p. 141.
[5] Ibid., p. 321.

drinks which are made in England and elsewhere out of fruit." [1]

Occasionally Wolff can discover no use for this or that phenomenon, as for instance for the turning of the planets on their axes, and for the rings of Saturn, but in such cases he falls back upon the comforting reflection that God is great and his ways unfathomable.[2]

In his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion,* completed in 1751 but not published until after his death in 1779, the English philosopher David Hume criticized the cosmological and teleological proofs from the point of view of empiricism. In reply to the cosmological argument he urged that it is as easy to ascribe self-existence to the universe itself as to its cause. There is no reason in the nature of the case why the latter should be upon a different level from the former in this respect. The cause of the universe requires a cause as much as the universe itself, and so we are simply driven further and further back without ever reaching a goal. Against the teleological argument he urged that we have no right to argue from the analogy of a finite cause to the cause of the universe and assume a mind back of it, for the universe is a unique effect. Order may belong to matter as well as to mind, and hence the existence of an orderly world is no proof that it was made by an intelligent being. If we are to argue from analogy at all, we may reason from the resemblance of the world to an animal or plant, and conclude that it is a living being

[1] Ibid., p. 354.
[2] Ibid., p. 150.

and God its soul. Or if we insist on seeking a cause outside the world, we must remember that from a finite world we can deduce at best only a finite cause. Assuming that the universe had an author he may have been a bungler, or a God since dead, or a male and female God, or a multiplicity of Gods. He may have been perfectly good, or perfectly evil, or a mixture of good and evil, or morally quite indifferent, the last hypothesis being the most probable.

A still more severe attack upon the traditional theistic proofs, including the ontological, as well as the cosmological and teleological, was made by the German philosopher Kant, this time from the point of view of philosophical rationalism. In his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* published in 1781, only two years after Hume's *Dialogues,* Kant says:

"There are only three possible ways of proving the existence of God by the speculative reason . . . The first is the physico-theological, the second the cosmological, the third the ontological. There are no more, and there can be no more. I shall show that the reason can accomplish as little in the one way (the empirical) as in the other (the transcendental), and that it spreads its wings in vain in the effort to rise above the world of sense by the mere power of speculation." [1]

Beginning with the ontological argument, he shows that the idea of the most perfect being does not in-

[1] Kant's *Sämmtliche Werke* (in the *Philosophische Bibliothek*), Vol. I, p. 510 ff.

volve its necessary existence, because existence is not an attribute or predicate, the omission of which makes our imagined being less perfect than it would otherwise be. To assert the existence of a thing is simply to posit it with all the attributes which go to constitute the idea of it. "A hundred real dollars contain not a bit more than a hundred possible ones. For since the latter signify the concept, the former the object actually existing, my concept, in case real dollars contained more than possibles ones, would not express the entire object and hence would not be a correct concept. . . . And so when I think of a thing and give it any sort of predicates, and as many of them as I please, until it is completely defined, nothing at all is added to it, if I add that it exists. For otherwise not the same thing which I had in my mind would exist, but something more, and I could not say that exactly the object of my thought existed." [1] "And so to try to demonstrate the existence of a supreme being by the celebrated ontological (Cartesian) proof from the mere idea of such a being, is to waste time and strength, and a man can as little increase his knowledge of reality from mere ideas as a merchant can increase his property by adding ciphers to the written statement of his assets." [2]

Turning to the cosmological proof Kant shows that so far as it is not merely another form of the ontological argument from the idea of a necessary being to

[1] Ibid., p. 517.
[2] Ibid., p. 519.

its existence, it is the unwarranted objectifying of a mere regulative principle of the understanding. We may be driven to assume a necessary existence as the ground of all contingent existence, but we can nowhere stop in our enumeration of the causal series and say that this is original and uncaused.

"If I am compelled to assume that existing things presuppose something necessary, but am not authorized to regard any particular thing as in itself necessary, it follows unavoidably that necessity and contingency do not belong to things themselves, for otherwise a contradiction would be involved. Consequently neither proposition is objective, but both can be at any rate only subjective principles of the reason, requiring us on the one hand to seek something necessary as the presupposition of all that exists, or, in other words, never to stop short of an *a priori* completed explanation, on the other hand, never to hope to attain such a completion, that is, never to regard an empiric fact as unconditioned and refrain from looking for its cause." [1] "The unconditioned necessity which we so much need as the final support of all things is a veritable abyss for the human reason. . . . We cannot avoid the thought, and yet we cannot endure it, that a being which we picture as the highest of all possible beings should say to itself: 'I am from eternity to eternity; beside Me there is nothing except what My Will has produced; *but whence then do I come?*' Here everything sinks under us, and the greatest perfection

[1] Ibid., p. 529.

like the smallest floats without an anchor before the speculative reason which finds no trouble in letting the one as well as the other vanish altogether." [1]

The teleological argument Kant treats with greater respect as the oldest and clearest of all and the one most easily comprehended by the common man. It actually does serve to produce belief in a divine creator, and to try to undermine its influence would be a sorry business. At the same time he shows that it does not accomplish what is claimed for it, since it gives us at best only a designer, not a creator, and only a finite and imperfect one at that; and, as it is based upon a questionable analogy—the analogy of man-made things—it cannot carry us beyond mere probability. Strict proof, indeed, or logical certainty of the existence of a divine being can be attained only by the ontological argument, and the futility of that he has already shown.

In a general criticism of the effort to base theology upon speculative reason, he adds, in full agreement with the principles of his critical philosophy:

"The proposition that every empiric event has a cause is a principle of natural science, not of speculative philosophy. For if, leaving out of sight all empirical facts, we try to apply a principle which contains the condition of possible experience to contingent existence in general, we have no justification for supposing that we can pass from something given to

[1] Ibid., p. 527.

something entirely different which we call its cause. Indeed in such a mere speculative use of it the very idea of cause, like that of contingency, loses all the meaning which it has in connection with concrete events. If now from the existence of things in the world we conclude that they have a cause, this conclusion belongs not to the natural but to the speculative use of the reason. For by the former not the things themselves but only what happens, hence only their states as empirically contingent are referred to a cause. That substance itself (or matter) has a contingent existence could be a conclusion of the speculative reason alone. But also, if I were thinking only of the form of the world, of its connections and changes, and wanted to deduce therefrom a cause entirely different from the world, this again would be a judgment of the mere speculative reason, for such a cause could not be the object of possible experience. The principle of causality, which has application only within the field of experience and outside of it is useless and even meaningless, would in such a case be employed in an entirely illegitimate manner. I assert then that all the attempts at a mere speculative use of the reason in the field of theology are entirely fruitless and in their very nature null and void." [1]

Thus, both by empiricism and by philosophical rationalism, in the persons of their greatest exponents, the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God was denied, and philosophy was at one with natural

[1] Ibid., p. 543. Compare also his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 84 ff.

science in closing the traditional roads to God, whether from the world of nature or the world of ideas. Unless some other way of reaching the assurance of the divine existence were discovered, complete scepticism must be the ultimate result for all thinking men. Kant himself was a theist, not an atheist, nor a sceptic, but the way in which he reached faith, and so rescued himself from the negative results of his own criticism, will appear in a later chapter. Here I have been concerned to show only the disintegrating effects of the critical philosophy.

BOOK II

RECONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER V

THE EMANCIPATION OF RELIGION

In the eighteenth century religion was commonly enslaved, on the one hand to dogma and on the other hand to conduct. The religious man, it was generally believed, is he who accepts certain truths and lives in accordance therewith. These truths might be simply the existence of God, and of a future life in which the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished, and might demand consequently only a life of virtue, or they might include a whole system of revealed theology and require the performance of many religious duties over and above the duties of natural morality. In either case a change of belief was likely to prove fatal to religion. If a man ceased to believe in the old system of theology, or, if he ceased to believe in a future life of rewards and punishments, religion itself seemed emptied of all meaning. The situation of religion was particularly precarious where the notion prevailed, as it did generally among the rationalists of

the period, that its sole function was to promote virtue by its sanctions of future reward and punishment. If it came to be believed that men are willing and able to be virtuous, without the hope of reward or the fear of punishment, all reason for religion was gone, and it might be expected that it would be abandoned as wholly superfluous. In other words, the more men advanced in moral character and strength the less use would they have for religion. Under these circumstances it is hardly to be wondered at that there was widespread contempt for religion and a widespread unwillingness to be known as religious, even among the best of men.

One of the most notable facts of modern religious history has been the emancipation of religion from this condition of servitude and its entrance upon a career of freedom and independence. The consequence has been a tremendous gain in the respect with which religion is regarded by thinking men of modern sympathies.

The first serious blow at the then prevailing view that religion is a mere means to virtue was struck by the philosopher Kant, toward the end of the eighteenth century. In his ethical writings he maintained that conduct based upon ulterior motives, whether the expectation of advantage in this life or in a life to come, was devoid of all virtue. Only wholly disinterested actions, performed in response to the categorical imperative of duty, were worthy of the name. Thus, according to Kant, religion, as commonly conceived, destroyed virtue instead of promoting it. Employed

as a motive to virtuous living it made truly virtuous living impossible.

Though Kant thus repudiated the traditional notion of religion as a mere means to a further end, his own interpretation of its content was not materially different from that of his rationalistic contemporaries. Religion is the recognition of our duties as the will of God. Doing our duty we are moral; recognizing it as God's will we are religious. The fact that it is God's will does not increase its obligation for us—religion does not enhance the binding character of morality—nor must religious faith mean the substitution of any other motive for the categorical duty for duty's sake, or it puts religion in place of morality, and hence becomes a curse instead of a blessing.

Thus religion was left by Kant in a singularly embarrassing situation. It meant the recognition of one's duty as the will of God, and yet, if this recognition were allowed to promote the doing of one's duty, the worth of the latter was vitiated and its moral quality destroyed. The matter was made all the more difficult by the fact that faith in God, according to Kant, meant faith in the ultimate happiness of the virtuous, God having formed the universe in such a way that in the end virtue will be rewarded by the happiness which it deserves. And yet this faith must not be made a reason for virtue, or the latter ceases to be virtue.

With the eudæmonism which still attached to Kant's view and gave religion so insecure a footing, his disciple Fichte broke completely. "The system,"

he says, "in which happiness is expected from a supernatural being, is a system of superstition and idolatry, which is as old as human corruption and with the passage of time has changed only its outer form. Whether this supernatural being is a bone, or a feather, or an omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient creator of heaven and earth—if happiness be expected from him, he is an idol." [1]

The poet Schiller also pronounced the notion that morality must ultimately be matched by happiness, "a morality for slaves," and the philosopher Schelling found the acme of immorality in the notion that virtue and happiness could by any possibility be opposed, for virtue itself is happiness.

Fichte's own religious faith differed from Kant's in identifying God with the moral order of the universe. The good deed succeeds infallibly, according to Fichte, because there is a moral order of the universe, or, in other words, because there is a God. And so we may call Fichte's religion ethical optimism. To be virtuous is to do one's duty without regard to consequences. To be religious is to have the faith that goodness will prevail, that there is a moral order which makes for the final victory of the right. One may be moral and a pessimist. One can be religious only if one be an optimist. This interpretation of religion has been very common in modern times. Where it prevails the connection of morality

[1] *Apellation an das Publicum; Sämmtliche Werke,* Vol. V, p. 219 ff.

and religion is still close, but the former is no longer, as the rationalists thought, a mere means to the latter, of worth only if the moral character be too feeble to sustain itself without extraneous support.

A still more complete break with the old notion of the nature and place of religion was accomplished by the great German theologian Schleiermacher. In his famous *Discourses upon Religion, addressed to the Educated among its Despisers,* published in 1799, with the specific aim of commending religion to those who were out of sympathy with it, he distinguished religion from dogma on the one hand, and from conduct on the other, and provided it with an independent place and value of its own. "Piety," he says, "vindicates for itself its own sphere and its own character only by abandoning entirely the provinces of science and practice; and when it has raised itself beside them, the whole field is for the first time completely filled and human nature perfected. Religion reveals itself as the necessary and indispensable third, as the natural complement of knowledge and conduct, not inferior to them in worth and dignity." [1] Religion, according to Schleiermacher, has its seat in the feelings, and consists in the consciousness of oneness with the absolute or infinite. "The reflection of the pious man is only the immediate consciousness of the general existence of all that is finite in the infinite and through the infinite, of all that is temporal in the eternal and through the eternal. To seek and find this in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and all

[1] *Reden über die Religion;* Lommatzsch's edition (1888), p. 108.

change, in all doing and suffering, and even in immediate feeling to have and know life itself only as this existence—this is religion. When it finds this it is satisfied; when this is hidden there is limitation and anxiety, need and death. And so religion is life in the endless nature of the whole, in one and all, in God; having and possessing all in God and God in all." [1] "The universe is uninterruptedly active, and every moment reveals itself to us. In every form which it brings forth, in every being to which out of the fullness of life it gives a particular existence of its own, in every event which it scatters forth from its rich and ever-fruitful bosom it acts upon us; and in all these impressions and their effects in us, to take up into our life and to let ourselves be moved by individual and limited things not as separate and opposed to each other, but as parts of the whole and expressions of the infinite—this is religion." [2]

Schleiermacher felt the influence both of the pietists, with whom he had his early schooling, and of the romanticists, to whose innermost circle he belonged for some time in Berlin. Both pietists and romanticists emphasized the feelings. The former, in opposition to the cold and barren scholasticism of the seventeenth century, laid stress upon heart religion, expressing itself in the consciousness of conversion and in the sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The latter, in opposition to the narrow and one-sided rationalism of the eighteenth

[1] Ibid., p. 106.
[2] Ibid., p. 123.

century, undertook to rehabilitate the despised life of the emotions and to promote a culture in which the passions and instincts should have untrammeled play. Schleiermacher's "Discourses" were a genuine product of the romantic spirit. In their wealth of imagery, their eloquent and sometimes turgid style, their emotional rhapsodies, their frank self-revelations, their emphasis upon the æsthetic side of life, their appreciation of the beauties of nature, they constitute one of the most typical of romantic writings. No two works dealing with the same subject could be more unlike than Schleiermacher's *Discourses* of 1799, and Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of the mere Reason,* of 1793. The one was a representative utterance of romanticism, the other of rationalism, both serious and lofty beyond most of the writings of their respective schools.

It is due to Schleiermacher's influence, direct or indirect, that religion has been defined in modern times as reverence for the boundless and eternal, for instance by Francis W. Newman, as awe before the mysterious and unknown by Herbert Spencer, as enthusiasm for an ideal by Strauss and Feuerbach, as the admiration of beauty by Ruskin, as the feeling of admiration or worship, without regard to the object which calls it forth, by Professor Seeley, in his notable work on "Natural Religion," published in 1882. The following passages from Seeley's work are worth quoting in this connection: "I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a power which is not himself and is immeasurably above him-

self, a power, in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness. And such now is nature to scientific men. I do not now say that it is good or satisfying to worship such a God, but I say that no class of men since the world began has ever more truly believed in a God, or more ardently or with more conviction worshiped him."[1] "The true artist is he who worships, for worship is habitual admiration. It is the enthusiastic appreciation of something, and such enthusiastic appreciation is the qualification without which an artist cannot even be conceived. Wherever, therefore, art is, there is religion."[2] "The result of the movement in art, which was represented abroad by Goethe and in England principally by Wordsworth, is still plainly perceptible, both in the art and even in the religion of the present age. An age which is called atheistic, and in which atheism is loudly professed, shows in all its imaginative literature a religiousness —a sense of the divine—which was wanting in the more orthodox ages."[3] To which may be added the following from Bosanquet's recent Gifford Lectures: "When we turn to consider religion in its widest bearing upon life, the impression thus left by the specialized tradition, though broadened, is confirmed. In this sense the religious consciousness has no special or exclusive connection with the supernatural, the other world, or even the divine. It is essentially the

[1] P. 19.
[2] Ibid., p. 91.
[3] Ibid., p. 104.

attitude in which the finite being stands to whatever he at once fears and approves, in a word to what he worships. It is impossible to draw the line at any point between the simplest experiences of this kind and those completest forms of devotion to which the term religion has been exclusively applied." [1] "In short, then, wherever man fairly and loyally throws the seat of his value outside his immediate self into something else which he worships, with which he identifies his will, and which he takes as an object solid and secure, at least relatively, to his private existence—as an artist in his attitude to beauty, or as a man of science to truth—there we have in its degree the experience of religion, and, also in its degree, the stability and security of the finite self." [2] No one acquainted with modern religious literature can fail to recognize the representative character of such utterances as these.

A still different conception of religion appears in Höffding's *Philosophy of Religion*, where it is maintained that "the fundamental axiom of religion, that which expresses the innermost tendency of all religions, is the axiom of the conservation of value," [3] and the core of religion is found in "the conviction that no value perishes out of the world." [4] But this definition also, while the fruit of the modern philosophical interest in the subject of values and explica-

[1] *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913), p. 235.
[2] Ibid., p. 240.
[3] *The Philosophy of Religion*, § 72.
[4] Ibid., § 2.

ble only in its light, presupposes the work of Schleiermacher in setting religion free from its traditional entanglements, and also particularly the work of Kant and Fichte. There are many other modern definitions of religion which cannot be referred to here, and the active prosecution of the philosophy and psychology of religion will doubtless give us many more.

The chief significance of Schleiermacher's conception of religion lay in the fact that he regarded it as a wholly subjective thing. Distinguishing it from knowledge on the one side and from conduct on the other he made it entirely independent of objective facts and practices. Religion is not a doctrine or system of doctrines touching God and man and redemption, nor is it a series of so-called religious acts, individual or communal. They are but its fruits; in its essence it is simply man's feeling of relationship to something larger or greater than himself. Whether there be any external object corresponding to his feeling is neither here nor there. If he feels himself one with a larger whole, he is religious, quite irrespective of its reality or unreality. The subject of religion is thus removed from the sphere of philosophy to that of psychology. To study religion is not to study the objects, real or otherwise, of the religious man's faith and worship—the being and nature of God and kindred themes—but the religious man himself, the origin and development of his religious feeling. Feuerbach was true, in so far, to the principles of Schleiermacher, when in his *Wesen des Christenthums* he substituted the problem of understanding the origin of

religion psychologically for the endeavor to show its rationality and truth.

To put religion wholly in the feelings has also meant to remove it from the category of duties and obligations. According to the traditional Christian view, religion, like the moral law, was given by God, and its observance required of men. To be religious was as much of a duty as to be virtuous. Irreligion, as well as vice, meant disobedience of the divine law, and the one entailed eternal punishment as truly as the other. When religion is identified with feeling or emotion, it is misleading to speak of it as a duty or an obligation. It may be highly desirable, and we may recognize that the person who has it is to be congratulated, but we do not think of its presence or absence as morally praiseworthy or blameworthy. The old notion that a religious man is morally better than a man without religion, that the latter is to be frowned upon, condemned, and avoided, is seen to be out of place. It is thus possible to view religion quite impartially; to study scientifically its origin and growth in the life of the individual; to examine freely the phenomena of conversion; and to compare and classify without prejudice different types of religious experience. Thus a genuinely scientific treatment of the psychology of religion, for which Schleiermacher's interpretation of religion opened the way, becomes for the first time practicable, and, though for various reasons, including prejudice and lack of interest on the part of scientific men, it has been very slow in becoming actual, it now has many exponents, and we

are beginning in some degree to realize the extraordinary revolution in traditional conceptions which is bound to result from it. The modern study of the psychology of religion, it is true, was not the immediate fruit of Schleiermacher's work. He prepared the ground for it by emphasizing the subjective character of religion and by distinguishing it from philosophy and ethics. But the psychology of religion had to wait for the general development of psychological interest and research, and the kind of work which students of the subject are now doing and the methods employed by them presuppose that development.

Schleiermacher's confinement of religion to the realm of the feelings involved no undervaluation either of knowledge or virtue. Nor did it mean that he failed to recognize the influence of religion over both. On the contrary he was very emphatic in asserting their intimate relationship and even interdependence. Without religion, the most uplifting and enlarging of all influences, neither knowledge nor virtue can be perfected. "But in my opinion it is impossible—heed this well—that a person can be virtuous without religion, or scientific without it." [1] "True science is perfected intuition. True practice is self-engendered culture and art. True religion is sense and taste for the infinite. To wish to have one without the other, or to imagine that one has it thus, is rash and wanton delusion." [2] Thus, according to Schleiermacher, all three belong together and con-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 108.
[2] Ibid., p. 110.

dition each other. But the relation is very different from that assumed by rationalists and dogmatists.

So far as the connection between religion and conduct is concerned, religion does not support morality by supplying inducements to a man to be virtuous. It supports morality by enlarging his whole nature, by bringing him into converse with the infinite, by awakening his consciousness of the All of which he is a part, and thus eliciting his higher and nobler instincts, and making it impossible for him to live a petty, narrow, and self-centered life. It means the substitution of the natural for the legal, the spontaneous for the forced, the real and vital for the external and formal.

Viewed in the old way religion might well seem superfluous and even harmful—unnecessary to those who recognized the inherent worth of righteousness, confirming in their error those who did not, and thus retarding their moral development. But, when religion is interpreted as emergence from the narrow limitations of the individual life into the consciousness of a larger whole, virtue in the highest sense, as the transcendence of self and the devotion of one's powers to the good of all, is of a piece with it. The two act and react upon each other, and neither can remain wholly alone. In distinguishing morality and religion Schleiermacher really united them more intimately than ever before. The one is no longer merely a means to the other, to be dispensed with if virtue can be attained without it. The more true virtue the more real religion. As virtue develops and enlarges, religion does the same, for the two are indissolubly

bound together, the consciousness of a larger whole and the activity corresponding therewith.

It is evident that with the transformation in the idea of religion was associated a transformation also in the idea of virtue. Correlative with the notion of religion as belief in future rewards and punishments was that of virtue as the keeping of a law in order to win the promised prize and escape the threatened penalty. Correlative with the notion of religion as the consciousness of a larger whole is that of virtue as life in the light of such consciousness—life for it and in devotion to it. The former promotes selfishness, the latter overcomes it. Here the modern social conscience has laid hold upon the matter, and has found in religion, thus interpreted, a powerful stimulus and inspiration. Set free from its old subordination to morality religion has become the support of a new and larger morality.

Schleiermacher defined religion as the consciousness of the All and of our relation to it. A modification of his idea has been influential which interprets the larger whole in terms of moral purpose, and makes religion consist in the recognition of this divine purpose and virtue life in sympathy with and in devotion to it. Matthew Arnold's description of God as the "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" illustrates this position, and, in the teaching of the German theologian Ritschl, it finds its completest and most consistent theological formulation. We are religious when we rise above our separate and single selves into the consciousness of a divine purpose, and,

when we devote ourselves to its accomplishment, we put our religion into practice and are righteous in the highest sense. The influence of this conception upon the religious thought and life of the present day it would be hard to exaggerate.

I have spoken of Schleiermacher's notion of the relation of religion to conduct. So far as its relation to thought is concerned, while he broke completely with the common eighteenth century assumption, both orthodox and rationalistic, that religion is a sum of doctrines, he recognized that thinking and feeling cannot be divorced, and that the religious man inevitably thinks about his religious experiences and instinctively strives to give them some sort of intellectual expression. Empty-headedness and thoughtlessness consort least of all with devoutness. "You will never call him pious who goes about with his mind closed in stupidity and with no openness of vision for the world's life." [1]

Theology of one kind or another is thus the natural fruit of religion, but it is not the source of it or identical with it. It results rather from reflection upon it. "If now this really constitutes the essence of religion —as I hope I have made clear enough to all of you— it is not difficult to answer the question: Where do those dogmas and theologies belong which many regard as the true essence of religion, and what is their relation to that essence? As a matter of fact I have already answered the question. For all these propositions are nothing else than the result of that

[1] Ibid., p. 106.

contemplation of feeling, of that reflection upon it, of which I spoke above. And the concepts which underlie these propositions, as is the case likewise with your empirical concepts, are nothing else than the common expression for a particular feeling. For its own sake religion needs no such expression, hardly even to propagate itself. But reflection needs it and creates it." [1]

Theologies, therefore, may differ widely, and yet the religion which underlies them be equally pure and genuine. The form which the theology takes depends upon many other things. The traditions into which a man is born, the training he has enjoyed, the prevailing ideas of the age in which he lives, are all reflected in his thought. Identical or similar experiences may thus express themselves in many different forms.

In this conception of the relation of theology and religion, which has become a commonplace since Schleiermacher's time, is to be found one of the principal secrets of the breadth and charity with which modern Christians regard the adherents of other faiths than their own. And it has made possible the scientific study of the history of religion which distinguishes our day. The old contrast between true and false religions, which led to the condemnation of all except Judaism and Christianity, is seen to be fallacious. When religion is interpreted as Schleiermacher interpreted it the adjectives true and false are as irrelevant to it as blue and yellow. The conclusions drawn from religion and the theologies built upon it

[1] Ibid., p. 75 ff.

may be true or false, but religion itself lies in another realm, where such categories are wholly out of place. As Schleiermacher himself says: "In the immediacy of religion all is true; for how could it otherwise come to be? But only that is immediate which has not yet passed through the concept, but has grown up simply in feeling." [1] "Everyone must be conscious that his religion is only a part of the whole, that there are views and sentiments touching the same conditions that affect him religiously which are as pious as his own and yet entirely different, and that there belong to other forms of religion perceptions and feelings for which he has perhaps no capacity. You see how immediately this beautiful modesty, this friendly and inviting tolerance, springs out of the essence of religion, and how little it can be divorced from it." [2]

As a matter of fact the modern notion of religion has made possible a degree of liberality which neither conservatives nor radicals were capable of in earlier days. To-day liberalism exists even among those of strong and deep religious faith, whereas in other days it could hardly be shared in so great a degree by any but the religiously indifferent.

Schleiermacher's interpretation of religion is not universally accepted, but, even so, it has had the effect everywhere of giving a new independence to religion and freeing it from its old subordination. Religion thus enjoys in present-day thought a respect, and commands an attention, even from non-religious men

[1] Ibid., p. 130.
[2] Ibid., p. 131.

which were formerly not accorded to it. So long as it was a mere means to some other end, eternal salvation or the practice of virtue, the belief that the end was chimerical, or that it could better be attained by other means, led to the condemnation of religion as unwholesome or vicious, and so long as it was indissolubly bound up with all sorts of traditional dogmas, the advancing intelligence of the modern age was disposed to count it among the outworn superstitions of the past, and to turn from it in contempt. But, when once set upon its own feet, it became an object of new interest to scientific scholars, whatever their own religious attitude. It has thus been studied with a new sympathy and impartiality, and it has also gained for itself respectful attention and treatment. This means much for the religious thought of to-day. A new atmosphere has been created within which beliefs and ideas of the most various kinds can live and breathe freely, while the discussion of them may be engaged in without rancor by men of diverse schools, both within and without the Church. There are still some who think of religion in the old way and denounce differences in religious belief with the old vigor and bitterness, but the great mass of modern thinkers, even those whose religious beliefs are conservative enough, live in a new world and breathe a new and freer air.

In concluding this chapter it should be said that one of the most notable things in the modern situation is the vast enlargement and enrichment of the idea of religion to which its emancipation from the old servi-

tude has led. It is widely recognized to-day that wherever a man is interested in something else than the life of the mere senses, or is devoted to something else than his own selfish welfare, there is religion. Whether it be art, or science, or philosophy, or patriotism, or humanitarianism, or the worship of God that thus takes him out of himself and lifts him into the region of the spiritual and ideal the essence of religion is his. Thus interpreted religion is no longer something to be outgrown and abandoned, a mere survival from a primitive and credulous age. It is the flower of the highest and best impulses and is destined to find permanent and ever expanding utterance in the developing life of man.

In this enlargement of its sphere and enrichment of its character, it is widely believed to-day, lies the greatest promise for the future of religion. The religious views of the modern age may be of one sort or another, old ideas may be abandoned and new ones may emerge wholly inconsistent with them, but so long as man is higher than the brute and more than a mere segregated and self-absorbed unit religion will have its place in human life. And as the misunderstandings of the past are outgrown, and its true nature generally recognized, it is hoped by many that it will constitute instead of a bone of contention a bond of union, promoting, not as too often in the past, the division, but the coöperation of all the forces making for virtue and enlightenment.

But this carries us beyond the subject of the present chapter. Here I have been concerned only to

show how religion was set free from its old connections and the ground cleared for positive reconstructions. Of course, the process cannot stop here. If religion be a real thing in the life of any man it must affect his thinking and his willing, as Schleiermacher himself recognized. But the chief historic significance of the particular process which has been traced lies in its negative aspect—the differentiation of religion from theology and from cult, so that it has become possible for it to express itself in the most various and novel ways.

CHAPTER VI

THE REBIRTH OF SPECULATION

THE critical philosophy of Kant denied the possibility of access to the thing-in-itself or to the reality lying back of phenomena. We can know what appears to us as it appears to us, but that is all. What it may be apart from its appearances or what may constitute its inner essence we have no means of determining. It is also impossible to transcend our ideas and to know a world of objective realities corresponding to them. In the former case, though we cannot know what they are, we must assume the existence of things in themselves, without which sense perception would be impossible; in the latter case we cannot be sure that there is any external reality whatsoever. This scepticism was intolerable to many, both philosophers and theologians. To be shut away from all reality beyond the phenomena of sense perception and the world of ideas seemed to make both metaphysics and religion a vain dream. Efforts were consequently made to escape the dilemma and to discover some means of attaining a knowledge of reality. Among these attempts the boldest and most imposing was that of post-Kantian idealism.

Already in 1787, in his work entitled *David Hume über den Glauben oder Idealismus und Realismus,* the philosopher Jacobi asserted that the assumption of things in themselves was a radical inconsistency in Kant's philosophy which really involved a thoroughgoing idealism or the denial of all reality outside the thinking self. The thing-in-itself, according to Kant, was not in space or time, and the category of causality could not be applied to it, for these had to do only with the world of phenomena. Hence, so Jacobi insisted, it cannot properly be called a thing or a substance; it is a mere nothing, and exists only in the mind of the thinking subject. To Jacobi, who was a convinced realist, such idealism was intolerable, but there were some of Kant's followers who welcomed it, and found in it the solution of all metaphysical and religious difficulties. Chief among them were the closely related triumvirate, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

Fichte was first attracted to Kant by the latter's triumphant vindication of human freedom which had seemed to Fichte himself forever disproved by the philosophy of Spinoza. The practical reason, according to Kant, makes the postulate of freedom a necessity. But in the phenomenal world there is no freedom. All that occurs therein is bound by the iron chain of cause and effect. The seeming contradiction is resolved by the assumption that the self has an existence beyond the world of phenomena, where the category of causation does not apply. But this means that the ego is a true thing-in-itself, and Fichte drew

the conclusion that there is no other, that the thing-in-itself which Kant had assumed to account for phenomena is in reality one with the thinking mind. The ego, according to Fichte, not only supplies the forms of thought, as Kant had said, but the material as well. This, of course, is thoroughgoing idealism. The following passage from his *Bestimmung des Menschen* shows clearly enough the controlling interest which led Fichtè to idealism. "With this insight, O mortal, be free and forever redeemed from the fear which depressed and troubled thee. Thou wilt now no longer tremble before a necessity which is only in thy thinking, no longer fear being oppressed by things which are thy own creation, no longer put thyself, the thinker, in the same class with that which thou thinkest. So long as thou couldst believe that such a system of things as thou hadst pictured to thyself actually existed independently and outside of thee and that thou mightst be only a link in the chain this fear was justified. Now that thou hast seen that all this is only in thyself and through thyself thou wilt surely not fear that which thou recognizest as thy own creation." [1]

Not intellectual considerations primarily but ethical drove Fichte to adopt the idealistic rather than the realistic alternative. As he said himself every man's philosophy depends on the kind of man he is.

In affirming itself as subject the ego, according to Fichte, necessarily affirms an object and so creates its own world by which it is limited and which it then strives to overcome. In this struggle for victory over

[1] Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, Vol. II, p. 240.

the world the moral life consists and in it the moral character is developed. Only as there is opposition to overcome can there be moral activity and growth. "My world," Fichte says, "is the object and sphere of my duties and absolutely nothing else." [1]

All reality is simply the activity of the ego. An independent reality for things it is not only intellectually but ethically forbidden us to assume. Were we to assume it freedom would be impossible and we should be but the slaves of nature instead of its masters. It is our duty not to conform to the world but to transform it in accordance with our ideals. It is there not to be served but to be used. It has no independent value of its own; it is a means only and not an end in itself. The ego is everything and all exists not simply for its sake but by its creation.

As the world is not an independent thing-in-itself, but is of the ego's own creating, it can be known through and through. For Kant's dualism of thought and thing, which had made the knowledge of the latter impossible, Fichte substituted the monism of the self which opened the whole of reality. Reality does not lie beyond our ken; we have immediate and sure access to it. Thus Kant's scepticism was circumvented, while his critical principles were fully confirmed. We do not pretend to transcend self-consciousness, but we know reality fully, for it is within consciousness, not without.

In the early statements of his philosophy Fichte spoke of the self which creates its own world in such

[1] Ibid., p. 261.

a way as to leave the impression that he meant by it only the individual self. But when accused in consequence of subjectivism and solipsism, he pronounced the impression erroneous and declared that the creative self is not a particular and limited person but the absolute ego. The theoretical reason, he admitted, cannot carry us beyond complete solipsism and pure subjectivism. We cannot rationally demonstrate the reality either of other minds than our own or of external things of any sort, but duty makes their existence certain to us. "I am confronted by phenomena in space which I conceive in the light of my own nature; I think of them as beings like myself. Rigid speculation has taught me, or will teach me, that these alleged rational beings outside of me are nothing but products of my fancy. . . . But the voice of my conscience cries: Whatever these beings may be in themselves thou must treat them as if they were free, autonomous, and entirely independent of thee. Assume it as certain that they are in no way subject to thee and that they can set before themselves their own ends; never interfere with the accomplishment of those ends, but do all that thou canst to forward them; honor their freedom; prize their ends as thine own. So ought I to act. Such action should be the object of all my thought; and will necessarily be if I have once made up my mind to obey the voice of my conscience. I shall accordingly always regard these beings as having their own life independent of me, as beings who have and accomplish ends of their own; I shall not be able to think of them otherwise; and the notion that

they are only products of my fancy will disappear like an empty dream." [1]

"I am confronted by other phenomena which I regard not as beings like myself but as irrational things. Speculation has no difficulty in proving that the notion of such things is developed solely out of my imagination and its necessary activities. But I need them and desire them for my own enjoyment. I am driven to use things for food and drink, not because I have an idea of them, but because I am hungry and thirsty. I am compelled to believe in the reality of that which threatens my bodily existence or is alone able to support it. Conscience also does its part in sanctifying and at the same time limiting my natural impulses. Thou shalt preserve and exercise and strengthen thyself and thy powers for they too are counted upon in the world plan. But thou canst preserve them only by acting according to the laws of things. There are also other beings like thyself whose powers are counted on as thine are and which can be preserved only in the same way as thine own. Permit them to make the same use of things as is required of thee. Honor what belongs to them as their property; treat what belongs to thee as thine own. So must I act, and my thinking must be in harmony therewith. Accordingly, I am obliged to regard these things as existing under laws of nature which are independent of me, although known by me, and hence to ascribe to them an existence of their own apart from myself. Being under the necessity of believing in such laws, and being

[1] Ibid., p. 259.

driven to investigate them, my empty speculation vanishes like the mist as soon as the sun appears." [1]

Thus it is our sense of duty alone that gives us a real world of men and things, "for in no other way does the world exist for any rational being." [2] "We do not act because we know; but we know because we are made for acting. The practical reason is the root of all reason." [3]

But duty also reveals the existence of a moral order not of our own creating, for its imperative, which we must obey quite without regard to consequences, is rational only if the good will bears fruit in good. This it must do, if not in the world of sense where good intentions often work harm, and where the right is often forwarded even by indifference and wickedness, then in a higher world of spiritual values.[4]

We are thus led to believe in an infinite will to which the moral order is due and which creates in us and for us the objective world wherein our duty lies. It is due to this infinite will that we know and can communicate and coöperate with others than ourselves, and that we and they have the same and not each a separate and different world to labor in.[5]

Thus while rejecting Kant's assumption of an independent world of things in themselves—for the infinite will creates not things in themselves but in our con-

[1] Ibid., p. 260.
[2] Ibid., p. 288.
[3] Ibid., p. 263.
[4] Ibid., p. 136.
[5] Ibid., p. 139 ff.

sciousness—Fichte was saved from mere subjectivity by belief in an absolute will. This absolute is all in all, and apart from him there is nothing. "The dead and heavy mass which simply filled up space has vanished, and in its place there flows and surges and murmurs the eternal stream of life and force and deed—of original life—thy life, Endless One; for all life is thy life, and only the religious eye penetrates to the realm of true beauty." [1]

Fichte's philosophy was criticized by his disciple Schelling, in his *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799), on the ground that he thought too contemptuously of nature and gave it too subordinate a place in the scheme of things. According to Schelling, nature is as real and original a datum as mind. It is not a mere means to the development of the ego; it is as much an end in itself as the ego is, and it passes through its own independent development. The absolute, Schelling maintained, in his *Darstellung meines Systems* (1801), is not the ego which creates and sets over against itself a non-ego or world of nature, as he had at first thought in agreement with Fichte; the absolute lies back of the ego and the non-ego, back of the distinction between thought and thing, subject and object, alike indifferent to both. Out of the absolute they have both come, and hence the two are in harmony, and there exists a complete parallelism of being and thought, as in the system of Spinoza, by which Schelling was largely influenced at this time. To know the absolute in its

[1] Ibid., p. 315.

pure absoluteness antecedent to its differentiation into nature and mind, is the final aim of all true philosophy. Such knowledge, Schelling went on to show, in his *Bruno* (1802), cannot be attained by the ordinary processes of thought, nor is it accessible to the mass of men. It can be grasped only in immediate intuition and only by souls possessed of spiritual vision which is of a piece with the æsthetic sense of the true artist.

Schelling's philosophy of the absolute was a genuine embodiment of the spirit of contemporary romanticism which in it came to most elaborate and comprehensive expression. Characteristic of romanticism was not only the controlling æsthetic interest of his philosophy, but also its brilliant flashes of insight, its wide range, its richness of content, its vagueness of outline, and the contempt shown in it for ordered thought and scientific method.

It was the last that finally led Schelling's friend and co-worker Hegel to break away from him and follow an independent path of his own. Philosophy, he said, should be science, not poetry. It should be based not upon mere intuition but upon rigorously logical and sustained thought. That Hegel acquired an influence far wider and more lasting than Schelling's was due not merely to the substance of his philosophy —indeed many of his most fruitful ideas were anticipated by Schelling—but also to the fact that he substituted careful and logical thinking for the immediate intuitions of genius and worked out a speculative system impressive both in its structure and dimensions.

Hegel agreed with Schelling that the absolute is the only proper subject of philosophy, but he disagreed with him in his definition of the absolute. The absolute, he maintained, is not mere being lying back of nature and mind and indifferent to them both. If it were, it would be impossible to explain their emergence from it. Nature and mind are themselves the absolute. They have not proceeded from it or been produced by it; they are identical with it. The absolute is not the mere quiescent background of life, it is itself living spirit and as such is constantly growing and developing. To live is to grow; to be is to become. But all becoming is overcoming. Fichte had taught that the ego sets over against itself a non-ego, in gaining the victory over which it finds its moral life. Hegel teaches that all development involves opposition and the overcoming of it. Without an object to work upon there can be no activity, only potentiality. The absolute does not exclude distinction and difference, it includes them. It is full of contradictions which it is continually overcoming and reconciling in a higher unity. Hegel's formula of development, already employed by Fichte, was the triad, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. All evolution proceeds from an original principle, through differentiation and distinction, to a higher unity which becomes again the starting point for a further process of unfolding and reuniting. Thus the absolute develops or unfolds itself by making itself another, and then overcoming this otherness in a richer and loftier unity.

The absolute's otherness is nature. In human con-

sciousness takes place the synthesis between thought and thing, and the opposition within the absolute is overcome. This evolution of the absolute is the true subject of philosophy and is to be studied in nature and history. To reach the absolute we do not turn back to an original substance or being which we can apprehend only in the ecstacy of immediate intuition; we seek the absolute in the world of matter and spirit in which alone it manifests itself. It can be fully known only at the end of the process of development, not at the beginning, and only as the process is traced through all its stages. Hegel did not mean to substitute for a knowledge of phenomena a higher kind of knowledge entirely divorced from them. On the contrary he was emphatic in his insistence upon keeping one's feet on the solid ground of given facts.

But philosophy does not stop with the mere facts as immediately given. It seeks the absolute which reveals itself in them, and is not content until it has interpreted them in its light and thus shown them to be rational. The aim of Hegel's philosophy was not to construct a world, but to explain the world we already have. It did not claim to take the place of science, or to make the latter unnecessary. But it undertook to set the facts of science in a higher connection and to discover their inner significance and real essence, for it maintained that not the mere brute fact but its meaning is the true reality. Like Fichte and Schelling, Hegel was a genuine idealist and found the essence of reality in mind, not matter. The absolute is spirit, and its development is nothing else than that of con-

sciousness, which also follows the triadic formula, thesis, or the ego as subject, antithesis, or the ego as object, and synthesis, or the recognition of the identity of subject and object. Being and thought are one, and the laws of the latter are the laws of the former. By following the necessary dialectic of thought we may trace the evolution of reality and assign to every event its place therein; for all that is is rational, and philosophy has not fulfilled its task until it has shown its rationality.

Hegel's system therefore contained an elaborate treatment both of nature and of history. In the former he depended largely upon Schelling, but in the latter he went his own independent way, and his contributions to an understanding of human history are the most valuable part of his work. His writings are full of brilliant historical generalizations and interesting interpretations of historical movements and events, and though investigation since his day has shown their unsoundness in perhaps the majority of cases, he yet did more than anyone else to promote an interest in history and to lay the foundations for the immense development of historical science during the past seventy-five years. At the same time his insistence upon the rationality of history, including its dark scenes as well as its bright, and his contention that all of it is but the working out of permanent and necessary laws, contributed to an extreme optimism which bore within it the seeds of reaction, not only against his reading of history but against the whole Hegelian philosophy.

Post-Kantian idealism, which reached its culmination

in the system of Hegel, was in general a protest against the phenomenalism of Kant and an effort to reach a knowledge of supraphenomenal reality which he had declared quite impossible. Kant's scepticism was based upon the dualism between idea and reality, and it was overcome by asserting their identity; and thus speculation, which he had shown to be quite incompetent to attain a knowledge of reality, was again legitimatized and made the road to the highest of all reality, the absolute self. This meant the denial of the primacy of the practical reason, which both Kant and Fichte had insisted upon, and the restoration of theoretical reason to its old sovereignty. But the contrast with pre-Kantian dogmatism, in which the theoretical reason was also supreme, was very great. Truth, according to Hegel, is not a fixed and finished thing which we may grasp in its entirety and express in a rigid and unchanging formula. Truth is constantly developing, and it embraces all sorts of inconsistencies and contrarieties. It is inclusive, not exclusive. Because it is this, we cannot say it is not that. It may be both this and that, or may be in process of becoming both, contradictory as they are. Thus the Hegelian philosophy made for breadth, not narrowness, for fluidity, not rigidity, for development and change, not for finality in statements of the truth. In all this its influence, particularly in the sphere of religious thought, has been tremendous.

In his *Encyclopædie der philosophischen Wissenschaften,* published in 1817, and more fully in his lectures upon the Philosophy of Religion, published

posthumously in 1832, Hegel applied the principles of his philosophy to the subject of religion, and his restatements of religious truth and his reinterpretations of Christian doctrine are of particular interest and significance. "God," he says, "is the absolute substance, the one true reality. Everything else that is real is not real in itself; it has no existence in itself; the only absolute reality is God alone, and so he is the absolute substance." [1] God comes to self-consciousness in positing himself as object, and in recognizing the oneness of subject and object thus set over against each other. His self-objectification is the world, which is thus a moment in the divine process of self-consciousness, or in the development of the absolute which comes to consciousness only through the finite. "The finite is an essential element of the infinite in the nature of God, and therefore we may say, God it is who makes himself finite, who sets limits to himself. This might at first sight appear undivine, but we find the same thing in the ordinary representations of God, for we are accustomed to believe in him as the creator of the world. God creates a world; God sets limits; outside of him there is nothing to set limits; he sets limits to himself in that he thinks himself, sets another over against himself; he and the world are two. . . . Only God is; God, however, only through the mediation of himself with himself. He wills the finite; he sets it before himself as another and thereby is made another, a finite, for he has another over against himself. This being another, however, is the contra-

[1] *Philosophie der Religion*, second edition (1840), Vol. I., p. 90.

diction of himself with himself, and hence he is the finite over against the finite. The truth is, however, that this finiteness is only an appearance." [1] "This existence of the finite must not continue but must be put an end to. God is the movement toward finiteness and again toward himself through its transcendence. In the ego, when it abolishes itself as finite, God returns to himself, and is only God in that he thus returns. Without the world God is not God." [2]

Religion, according to Hegel, is the relation of the finite spirit to the infinite. It is the knowledge which the finite spirit has of the infinite, and hence, since we are but moments in the consciousness of the Absolute, the knowledge which the infinite spirit has of itself. So Hegel calls religion both "knowledge of God" and "God's self-consciousness."

The religious consciousness begins with feeling. In feeling God is immediately given, so that we know that he is, without knowing what he is. Feeling by itself, Hegel says in opposition to Schleiermacher, has no content and is of no value. To give it content we have to think, and to know God is to think him, not merely to feel him. At its highest stage religion is knowledge. "Feeling may have the most various content. We have a feeling of right, of wrong, of God, of color, of hatred, of enmity, of peace, and so on. There exists in it the most contradictory content. ' The lowest as well as the highest and noblest has place in it. . . . When God is in feeling he has no advantage over the

[1] Ibid., p. 193.
[2] Ibid., p. 194.

worst thing, but there grows upon the same ground the most royal flower beside the ugliest weed." [1] "People often appeal to their feelings when they have no reasons. To a man who does thus there is no answer, for with the appeal to one's feelings community is destroyed. When dealing with thoughts and conceptions, on the other hand, we are upon common ground, that of the reason. There we have the nature of the thing before us and can come to an understanding about it, for we submit to the thing and agree what it is. When, however, we turn to the feelings, we leave that which is common and retire into the sphere of the accidental. In this sphere everyone makes the matter his own and relates it to his particular individuality. When one says, You ought to have such feelings, the other can answer, I have them not, I am not made so. . . . Moreover, feeling is that which man has in common with the brute. It is animal and sensuous. And hence, when that which is right, or virtue, or God, is shown to be in the feelings, it is the worst way to prove it. God is essentially in thought. That he is in thought only through thought is naturally suggested by the fact that only men and not brutes have religion." [2]

This means that religion at its highest is one with philosophy. The truths which religion has in the form of images or symbols, drawn from finite experience and false or inadequate when taken only finitely, philosophy views in their true place as elements in the in-

[1] Ibid., p. 126.
[2] Ibid., p. 127.

finite consciousness of God. To interpret all things from the divine point of view—*sub specie aeternitatis* —this is the aim of philosophy and of religion as well.

The various positive religions, according to Hegel, represent stages in the development of the knowledge of God. All of them contain partial truth and lead up gradually to the absolute religion or Christianity. In all ages God has been manifesting himself. "To manifest itself belongs to the very nature of spirit. A spirit which does not manifest itself is not spirit. Men say that God created the world, as if it were an act that happened once for all and does not happen again; as if it were something that might or might not be; as if God might manifest himself or not; as if it were an accidental, arbitrary matter, not belonging to the very nature of God. But God as spirit is by his very nature a self-revealing being. He does not create the world once for all, but is the eternal creator, the one eternally revealing himself." [1]

In Christianity we have the revelation of the Absolute in the most perfect form. The doctrine of the Trinity, the central doctrine of Christianity, represents the threefold process of the divine consciousness. In the Father we see the Absolute in its original oneness, in the Son its self-objectification, in the Spirit the reunion of the two. The Son differs from the world in being eternal and supraphenomenal, while the world is only temporal and spatial. The Christian statement, God is love, is but another way of expressing the same process of the divine consciousness. "The Holy

[1] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 197.

Spirit is eternal love. When one says God is love, this is grandly and truly said, but it is meaningless to conceive it so simply without analyzing the conception of love. For love is a distinction of two, which, however, are for each other neither distinct nor separate. Love is the feeling and consciousness of this identity, of this existence outside myself. I have my self-consciousness not in myself but in another. . . . This perception, this feeling, this knowledge of oneness, is love. God is love, that is the distinction and the negation of the distinction." [1]

Hegel found a place also for other facts and doctrines of Christianity, as for instance the doctrine of the incarnation, in which the oneness of God and man is shown. The principal truth, he says, "is that of the oneness of divine and human nature—God become man." [2] This is the great thing in connection with Christianity. Not that there should come a divine teacher of morality, or even a divine teacher of this idea of unity, as if representation and persuasion were of chief importance, but that there should be the immediate presence and certainty of divinity. Becoming aware through the incarnation of the oneness of God and man, we live in the consciousness of it and thus are freed from the separateness and individuality in which evil consists, or in other words are redeemed from sin and reconciled to God. [3]

It is thus not an accident that in modern theology

[1] Ibid., p. 227.
[2] Ibid., p. 208.
[3] Cf. ibid., p. 283.

the doctrine of the incarnation has had a place of prominence unknown since the time of the old Greek fathers. It is widely emphasized to-day, particularly in Anglican circles, where Hegelianism is still very popular, as the fundamental Christian truth, and a favorite name for Christianity among Anglican theologians is "the religion of the incarnation."

The death and resurrection of Christ were also reinterpreted by Hegel and given an important place in his religious system.[1] The death of Christ means the complete identification of the divine with the human. It is man's nature to die, and in dying Christ showed that he was truly man. But his death was also the death of God, and thus it revealed again the oneness of divinity and humanity in showing limitation and negation even in God. But the negation was only temporary. Christ did not remain dead. If God is man, man is God. A moment in the process of the development of the absolute, he overcame all weakness and death, thus assuring the believer of his own ultimate victory.

The Church, too, had its place in Hegel's reinterpretation of Christianity. Within it the process of reconciliation, representatively carried on in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, is made practical in the lives of believers. Through the cultus God gives himself to be apprehended by the worshiper and becomes immediately present to his consciousness.[2]

[1] Cf. ibid., p. 295 ff.
[2] Cf. ibid., p. 308 ff.

Thus Hegel claimed that his system was in complete accord with Christianity, preserving its true essence and revealing its inner significance. In how far he was sincere in his claim, or in how far he was influenced by the desire to commend his philosophy to men of conservative tendencies, it is impossible to say. Like many contemporary romanticists, he favored conservatism both in religion and in politics, and his philosophy of the Absolute was so conceived as to subordinate subjectivity to objectivity, the individual to the community. He began as a student of theology, and his earliest desire was to show the rationality of Christianity and thus restore its waning prestige with thinking men. This desire never left him, and without doubt accounts at least in part for his permanent interest in Christian doctrine and for his inclination to reinterpret it in the light of his own matured philosophy. Upon its rationality he always insisted. It was not a religion to be justified only by an appeal to feeling and to be defended only by abandoning the method of strict reasoning. With the position of Jacobi, as with that of Schelling, he had no patience. Religion is knowledge, and Christianity as the absolute religion is knowledge in the highest sense, the knowledge of the absolute in its completest self-revelation.

It is not surprising that Hegelianism proved very attractive to Christian theologians. By means of it many of them found it possible to recover much of the historic system, which had been undermined both by rationalism and by the critical philosophy, and to vindicate it against all assaults. An Hegelian School

made its appearance in theological circles and grew with great rapidity. The fortunes of the school cannot be followed here. It may simply be said that it soon divided into a right and left wing, the former conservative, the latter radical in its treatment of the Christian system.

One question at issue between them was whether the traditional facts of Christian history, such as the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, which Hegel had made the symbols of great and eternal truths, were really historical. In his *Leben Jesu,* published in 1835, David Friedrich Strauss set forth the mythical theory, according to which Christ's miracles and the other supernatural events of his career were mere embodiments of ideas of the Messiah current in the early Christian communities. The incarnation was taken to be simply an ideal representation of the general union of God and man, or of the divinity of the whole human race. The predicates commonly ascribed to Christ really belong not to him, but to ideal humanity. The net result of the controversy caused by this momentous book was to undermine confidence in the Christian character of the Hegelian philosophy, and in its efficiency as a means of defending Christianity. Instead of supporting Christian facts and doctrines by revealing their inner significance, it was seen to dissolve them altogether. The consequence was that many abandoned Hegelianism in favor of Christianity, while others abandoned Christianity in favor of Hegelianism, and philosophy and religion, which had seemed permanently reconciled, were again at war.

Another question at issue between the two wings was whether God is identical with the world process of evolution and wholly immanent in it, or whether he also transcends it. The latter was maintained by theologians of the right wing, while Strauss and others of the left adopted a genuine pantheism, going on to complete naturalism [1] and even materialism.[2]

Meanwhile, a general reaction against Hegelianism was setting in. Its inordinate self-confidence and its claim to be the supreme and final philosophy before which no secrets could remain permanently hid aroused impatience and scepticism. Its thoroughgoing optimism, often too little regardful of existing evil and misery, bred a distrust of the rationality of the universe, resulting frequently in extreme pessimism, as in Schopenhauer. Its *a priori* character and its controlling interest in the Absolute became increasingly distasteful to an age in which physical science was making tremendous advances and the empirical method was finding continually new vindication. The development of historical study, for which Hegel himself had done so much, also proved disastrous to the Hegelian system, as it revealed the artificiality of its philosophy of history and led to a growing distrust of the method of reading the past in the light of general laws and *a priori* principles. In the reaction against Hegelianism the whole of post-Kantian idealism fell under a common condemnation. It seemed to an ever larger

[1] Cf. Strauss: *Die Christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwickelung*, 1840 ff.

[2] Cf. Feuerbach: *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, 1841.

number of thinkers entirely divorced from living reality. In fact, the era of the great speculative systems was over and was already succeeded by the age of empiricism and positivism.

But, though widely discredited, Hegelianism still makes its influence everywhere felt in the sphere of religious thought. The prevailing monistic tendency of recent generations, of which I shall speak more particularly in the chapter on Divine Immanence, the recognition of the dynamic rather than the static character of truth, the fondness for the symbolic interpretation of Christian doctrines, the inclination to reconcile contradictions and overcome differences in a higher unity, seen most strikingly in the modern movement for church unity in England and America—all these are due, not wholly to be sure, but in no small part, to the influence of the Hegelian philosophy. Its speculative spirit on the other hand and its reading of religion in intellectual terms find scant favor to-day in any quarter.

CHAPTER VII

THE REHABILITATION OF FAITH

TOWARD the close of his famous essay on miracles, published in 1748, Hume remarked: "Our most holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason, and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such trial as it is by no means fitted to endure."

The words, whatever their motive, meant a complete reversal of the common rationalistic position accepted in his day by both deists and orthodox. According to them no one should believe anything without good and adequate reasons for his belief. But Hume's remark was prophetic of the overthrow of the rationalistic school in religion and of the appearance of a new spirit and attitude which became very common in the nineteenth century.

The remark reminds us of the position of Occam and other schoolmen of the late Middle Ages with their recognition of the complete divorce of reason and faith. The truths of Christianity, so they maintained, have no basis in human reason; some of them indeed are quite irrational; but they are to be accepted on the authority of the Roman Church. They might have been even more irrational than they are and yet it

would be our duty to accept them if taught by the Church.

In the eighteenth century, on the other hand, when Hume wrote the words quoted above, the notion of faith's independence of reason was generally regarded as the greatest possible scandal, but it has come again into favor largely as a consequence of the sceptical development of that century.

The repudiation of dependence upon reason in religious things, voiced in Hume's remark, found in the great evangelical movement of the eighteenth century its most striking and influential expression. English evangelicalism was closely connected with German pietism and represented the same general interpretation of Christianity, but it arose under other conditions and faced a different religious situation. As a consequence its emphasis was in some respects unlike that of the older movement, and though its effects upon morality and practical religion were similar, its place in the development of Christian thought was altogether diverse.

German pietism faced, as we have seen, a rigid and uncompromising scholasticism, and though orthodox in its doctrinal teachings, it changed the emphasis from theology to life and so broke the hold of the traditional system and promoted its rapid disintegration. English evangelicalism, on the contrary, arose at a time when rationalism was widely dominant, and when the old orthodoxy was a neglected and discredited thing. The chief foe of true religion was not a cold and barren scholasticism, but, as it seemed to Wesley and his

followers, a rationalism which had undermined the old faith and substituted human pride and self-sufficiency for the conviction of sin and the sense of need. English evangelicalism therefore bore from the start the aspect of a conservative reaction, endeavoring to overthrow rationalism, the typical modern movement of the day, and to restore the earlier faith which it had destroyed.

The contrast between evangelicalism and rationalism appears most sharply in connection with the doctrine of the fall. The tendency everywhere in rationalism was to minimize that doctrine and to emphasize the moral and intellectual ability of the natural man. On the other hand, according to Wesley, "The fall of man is the very foundation of revealed religion. If this be taken away, the Christian system is subverted nor will it deserve so honorable an appellation as that of a cunningly devised fable." [1] With this judgment all of the Evangelicals were in hearty agreement, and recognized, as Wesley did, the fundamental character of the difference between themselves and their rationalistic contemporaries. With the doctrine of the fall was wrapped up the whole traditional system of supernatural redemption, and through the influence of the Evangelicals it was rehabilitated and given its old place of prominence.

But the evangelical revolt against rationalism involved more than the mere restoration of doctrines rejected by the rationalists. It led to a general distrust of the human reason as an organ of religious truth and

[1] Wesley's *Works* (New York, 1827), Vol. I, p. 176.

to the recognition of another faculty altogether, a faculty of perception, by which spiritual realities are apprehended as directly as physical phenomena by the bodily senses. This faculty Wesley called faith. It is the fruit of the Spirit and belongs only to the regenerate. The natural man is altogether without it, and hence it is quite impossible for him to see and understand the spiritual truth revealed to the Christian believer alone. "It is necessary that you have the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, emphatically so called; that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood, to be the evidence of things not seen, as your bodily senses are of visible things; to be the avenues to the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects, and to furnish you with ideas of what the outward 'eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.' And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no proper apprehension of divine things, no just idea of them." [1]

Wesley's conception of faith meant the completest possible break with the current position. It had been contended that religion must be rational like everything else offering itself for acceptance, and to be rational meant to appeal to the reason not simply of the regenerate but of the natural man as well. Both the opponents of Christianity and its apologists were in agreement upon this matter. If the principles of Christianity were not rational, it could not possibly have

[1] *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion: Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 195.

come from God. The Evangelical movement really represented an abandonment of this position in spite of Wesley's frequent insistence upon the rationality of Christianity. It meant the dethronement of reason from its place of supremacy and the appeal to another part of man's nature for ultimate assurance and satisfaction in religious things.

The persistence of the evangelical notion of faith is well illustrated by the following passages from the work of a modern Anglican divine, Professor Swete of Cambridge: "Faith and Reason have no quarrel with one another. One is the supernatural faculty which answers to the revelation of God and of the spiritual order; the other is the natural faculty by which we judge of natural things. Both are from the Light which lighteth every man, specially them that believe. Faith indeed transcends reason, but the transcendence ought not to suggest conflict; for when reason has reached its limit, it is not unreasonable to have recourse to the higher gift which supplies thought with 'things which eye saw not and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man.'" [1] "In the presence of spiritual truth the natural powers are inoperative until they are quickened by the Spirit of God, Who inspires faith. The 'natural' man can judge of things that belong to his own order; the 'spiritual' man has over and above his natural faculties a supernatural gift by which he 'judges all things.'" [2]

[1] *Faith in Its Relation to Creed, Thought and Life* (1895), p. 26.

[2] Ibid., p. 32.

The faculty of faith of which Wesley spoke is rooted in feeling. The experience of conversion is an experience of joy and exaltation in the consciousness of a changed nature. In this experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are immediately given, and faith, the new spiritual sense, is the organ of communication between the redeemed believer and the Spirit. It has to do primarily with personal communion, not with the apprehension of truth, and hence, though it may have intellectual elements, it is much more than a merely intellectual faculty.

It is true that Wesley represented it as the organ by which we come to a knowledge of various truths inaccessible to the natural man, but his actual method of procedure was to look for such truths in the Bible and accept them on its authority. What faith does therefore is not to perceive revealed truths, but the revealer of them; in other words it enables a man to recognize the Spirit of God and to have the assurance of his presence. Herein lies the real significance of the evangelical conception of faith, even though Wesley himself in his hostility to the rationalism and scepticism of his day did not fully realize it. In the matter of religious truth and our apprehension of it, he simply went back to the old position of the absolute authority of the Bible. Instead of leaving every Christian man to discover such truth as the Spirit might reveal to him personally he insisted that the authority of the Bible must be recognized and its teachings accepted without question. But for assurance he depended upon faith, not reason, the experi-

ence of the presence of the Divine, not the recognition of the soundness of a logical conclusion. The Evangelicals themselves were too little clear in this matter, and carried with them too much baggage from an outworn theological system, to make the break with the rationalistic position complete and to bring a new age in religion. They recognized that religion was something more than a mere system of truths, but they made it include the latter, and so the old notion lived on to the serious detriment of the new. But their influence counted for much, and was one of the most important factors in promoting the coming of the modern age.

Shortly after the rise of English Evangelicalism there began a reaction against rationalism of an altogether different type. Already by Jean Jacques Rousseau in France a crusade had been started against the dominant ideals of the age. His writings mark an epoch not only in the history of literature but in the history of thought and culture as well. Into the cool, abstract, rationalistic atmosphere of the day was thrown the flaming spark of his passionate genius, opposing everything that the eighteenth century, in its complacent self-satisfaction as the crowning century of history and the flower of the world's culture, held most dear. Sentiment instead of reason, passion instead of self-control, love of nature instead of civilization, contempt for all the amenities of society and attainments of human progress upon which the century chiefly prided itself—seldom has history seen a greater

anomaly than Rousseau in the midst of a period and a people dominated by Voltaire.

The keynote of his career as a writer was struck in his earliest publication, a prize essay on the theme *Has the Revival of the Sciences and Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?* in which he defended the negative with an ardor and eloquence that captivated half the world and angered the other half but astonished everybody. Rousseau owed something to others who had gone before him, particularly to the encyclopedist Diderot, but he owed most to his temperament and training, the temperament of a romanticist and a training, or lack of training, fitted only to emphasize what was most emotional and least conventional in him. It is no wonder that he made a sensation and outraged the leaders of his generation, but it is no wonder also that he fascinated and compelled the adherence of an ever growing multitude, especially of the younger generation, both in his own and foreign lands.

The influences started by Rousseau were promoted a generation later by Chateaubriand, and out of them grew the romantic school in literature, specifically so called, which was dominant in France in the early part of the nineteenth century and numbered among its leaders such men as Lamartine, de Vigny, and Victor Hugo. In Germany the movement included Goethe, Novalis, Tieck, the two Schlegels, and many others. In England romanticism had its most influential exponents in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron. Everywhere the tendencies were similar,

though the forms in which they appeared varied with differing racial and individual temperaments. Everywhere there was love of nature, affected if not real, impatience with the coldness and barrenness of rationalism, emotionalism, subjectivity, and individual self-expression, often in the most untrammeled forms. Romanticism wrought a profound revolution in the culture of the western world, and its influence is still widely felt. It was primarily a literary movement, but it affected all the arts in greater or less degree, as well as philosophy, religion, and even science. Almost as truly as the eighteenth century is called the century of rationalism, the nineteenth may be called the century of romanticism.

It was in Germany that the spirit which found so notable an expression in the romantic school of literature first made itself felt in the religious sphere. An interesting illustration of what it meant in that sphere is the attitude of the so-called Magician of the North, George Friedrich Hamann of Königsberg. A fellow townsman and friend of the philosopher Kant, his position was in extremest possible contrast not only to the dogmatism and rationalism of the age, but also to the new critical philosophy. To analyze is to lose the real essence of a thing; to distinguish is to destroy. No clear knowledge of the soul and its faculties is possible. It is a mass of contradictions and can be grasped only in feeling.

Hamann felt the influence not only of Rousseau but also of Hume, with whose writings he was very familiar, but he was a mystic as Hume was not, and

from the latter's philosophical scepticism he found refuge in the immediate apprehension of reality. We experience only what is directly given us. We have given us, however, not merely physical facts by nature but spiritual facts by revelation. Or rather both are equally revealed to us, and the former as well as the latter can be apprehended only by faith. Nature and the supernatural are truly one. The traditional separation of the two is fallacious. The activity of God cannot be discriminated from that of nature; nor can the divine be set apart from the human. Not distinction, but unity, is the important thing here as everywhere.

Christianity was the only religion that satisfied Hamann because it stood for the oneness of God and man, and in its most mysterious and irrational doctrines he found his chief delight. Yet he was not at all an orthodox Christian in the ordinary sense. On the contrary he was a radical at many points, though not at all a rationalist, as most of the radicals of the century were. The primitive spirit, the unquestioning poetic faith of childhood, the directness of unreflecting vision, the immediacy of spiritual knowledge—these he chiefly emphasized. He was not a systematic thinker or writer, and his influence was felt only in a limited circle and chiefly through personal contacts, but he did much to inspire and give direction to the genius of Herder, Goethe, and many others.

An attitude similar to Hamann's defined itself much more clearly in the latter part of the eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth in a

remarkable philosophical movement in which the German philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi was the principal figure. Jacobi's primary interest was certainty and it was in his search for some basis of assurance that he developed his faith philosophy, or philosophy of feeling, which was of much greater historic significance than most of his contemporaries were willing to admit. By rational demonstration, according to Jacobi, we can never get beyond the conditioned, —the phenomenal world of cause and effect. The philosophy of the understanding can do no more than explain phenomena in terms of causation. It cannot reach underlying or antecedent reality; it cannot reach being or existence, but only appearances. With Kant he recognized that the understanding is unable to carry us back of phenomena to the thing-in-itself, and in a very acute criticism of Kant's philosophy he maintained that its logical result, far from Kant's intention as it was, was thoroughgoing idealism and solipsism, or the denial of all reality outside the thinking self.

Jacobi himself was a convinced realist and such a result was intolerable to him. If reality could not be reached by the philosophy of the understanding, it must be reached in some other way. The way which he finally took was that of feeling, or faith. We are immediately certain of the existence of an outer world, including men and things. It is incapable of proof, for to prove means to deduce from something that is more certain. So far as we can show, our sensations may be self-created and point to nothing beyond. But

we are none the less secure in our conviction that there is an external world with which we are in communication; in fact we are as sure of it as of our own existence. Though we cannot prove it, we believe it, and our belief is as much to be relied upon, indeed even more to be relied upon than any conclusion reached by logical demonstration. There must be some kind of direct and immediate certainty which precedes scientific knowledge, or knowledge derived from proof, for all proof involves something requiring no proof. Second hand or derived knowledge presupposes a first hand and immediate, and the latter is superior to the former. The great fault of rationalism, according to Jacobi, was to believe only what can be proved. True philosophy consists in assuming a reality which cannot be proved and then experiencing it.

In tracing the history of rationalistic philosophy, or the philosophy of demonstration, Jacobi was led to make a careful study of Spinoza, and his work *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza,* published in 1785, did much to turn the attention of his contemporaries to the great Jewish philosopher. Jacobi recognized Spinoza's system, with its absolute determinism, as the most perfect fruit of the demonstrative method in philosophy, and he took it as the supreme example of what such a method must inevitably lead to. Demonstration presupposes necessity. Only as one thing necessarily follows another, or is necessarily involved in it, can it be deduced therefrom by the reason. If there be freedom or chance anywhere, demonstration fails us, and only observation or experience can reveal the truth.

But Jacobi maintained that absolute determinism is refuted by our consciousness of freedom. We know that we are free in the same immediate way that we know there is an external world. It is impossible to prove it, but we feel it and practice it and are as sure of it as of anything we can prove. It is an original datum of consciousness, and there is nothing more certain to which to appeal in its support. Man belongs to two worlds—the world of nature and the world of spirit—and he is as immediately conscious of the one as of the other. In the one necessity reigns; in the other freedom. A part of nature and subject to its laws, he is yet superior to it and controls and employs it for his own purposes. Determinism is therefore refuted by experience, which has more weight than all rational demonstration, and the conclusions of the philosophy of the understanding are shown to be false.

The outcome of the demonstrative method in philosophy, according to Jacobi, is not simply absolute determinism, or fatalism, but also atheism, or nihilism. We may be led by it to the existence of an all-inclusive substance, as in Spinozism, or to the denial of all objective existence, as in a logically consistent Kantianism; but no place is left for God, that is for free creative intelligence. But this, too, Jacobi maintained, is given in experience. We cannot prove the existence of God. Kant's exposure of the weakness of the traditional theistic arguments and his demonstration of the impossibility of proving God, freedom and immortality by the theoretical reason, Jacobi regarded as con-

clusive. But we may have the same irresistible certainty of God's existence that we have of our own freedom and of the reality of an external world.

But how can this be? Here we come upon the most difficult and obscure part of Jacobi's philosophy, but the part which he was most interested in, and which most directly concerns us here. Our certainty of God's existence, according to Jacobi, is not the result of a line of argument, a mere conclusion from data given in experience, it is the fruit of immediate observation. "It had become evident, and must be clear to every unprejudiced mind who looked more deeply into things, that these truths [God, freedom and immortality] were either to be accepted on the immediate authority of the reason [*Vernunft*], whose knowledge is wholly without proofs, mysterious, higher, and independent of all indicia, or were to be rejected as empty deceit." [1]

We are endowed not only with the faculty of sense perception, but also with a spiritual faculty by which we directly and at first hand perceive God and spiritual realities. This reminds us of the evangelical conception of faith Indeed, the spiritual faculty assumed by Jacobi was as much a faculty of direct vision as was the faith of which Wesley spoke. But it differed from the latter in being natural, not supernatural, an endowment shared by all men and not confined to those born of the Holy Spirit.

Jacobi, it should be said, was not only a realist but

[1] *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung: Jacobi's Sämmtliche Werke*, Vol. III, p. 367.

also an empiricist, demanding immediate experience as the only adequate basis for the assurance of reality. And herein lay the chief significance of his philosophy. For demonstration he substituted experience, thus breaking with philosophical rationalism and anticipating the scientific attitude of the modern age. It is true that the experience to which Jacobi appealed was not universally recognized as valid, nor was the existence of an organ of spiritual knowledge, such as he assumed, allowed by everybody, but the tendency of his philosophy is clear enough nevertheless.

According to Jacobi we cannot find God in nature. There mechanical causation reigns, and science is entirely right in treating nature as self-sufficient and refusing to operate with the assumption that there is a God. To deal with nature in any other way is to make science impossible and to put ignorance and folly in place of knowledge and understanding. Nature conceals God, but he is revealed in man, who by his free and hence supernatural will conquers nature and controls it. "Nature hides God because it reveals everywhere only fate, an unbroken chain of merely efficient causes without beginning and end, excluding with a like necessity both providence and contingency. . . . Man reveals God, inasmuch as he raises himself above nature in his spirit, and by virtue of this spirit sets himself over against nature as a power independent of it and unconquerable by it, battles with it, overcomes it, and rules it. When a man has a living faith in this indwelling power which is superior to nature, he believes in God; he feels, he experiences him.

When he does not believe in such an indwelling power, he has no faith in God; everywhere he sees and experiences mere nature, necessity, fate." [1] The faculty of spiritual perception is thus a faculty of self-consciousness which looks within, not without, and finds God in finding oneself as a free being, or real person.

At first Jacobi called the faculty by which we perceive God and the world of spiritual realities "Glaube" or "Faith." But later, with the evident desire of giving it philosophical standing, he added the name "Vernunft" or "Reason," distinguishing it from the logical faculty which he called "Verstand" or "Understanding." Kant had also distinguished between the two, but his distinction was very different from Jacobi's. With the assumption of a faculty of direct vision, by which we may perceive God and spiritual realities, he would have nothing to do. Jacobi's Platonic use of the word reason was unfortunate, for it tended to obscure his real position. In the common terminology of his day, reason was as much a logical faculty as understanding, and its use instead of faith made his meaning the more difficult of comprehension. As a matter of fact, though he employed the word Reason for his higher faculty of direct perception, he set it over against the reason as commonly understood, and maintained that the latter cannot reach God or spiritual realities of any kind. Only by immediate perception can we apprehend such objects, but the immediate perception of them gives us the highest kind of certainty of their reality. "As the reality which reveals

[1] Ibid., p. 425.

itself to our outer senses needs no guarantor, inasmuch as it is itself the strongest witness to its truth, so the reality which reveals itself to that inner sense, which we call reason, needs no guarantor. It too is itself and alone the strongest witness of its truth. Man necessarily believes his senses and necessarily believes his reason, and there is no higher certainty than the certainty of such belief." [1]

Although belief gives us the certainty of the existence of a world of spiritual realities, Jacobi insisted that this certainty is only that of feeling and must not be translated into the terms of clear and definite or scientific knowledge. We are immediately aware of our freedom, but we cannot reconcile it with our existence in a physical world, where the law of cause and effect is in control, and where necessity reigns. We are immediately aware that there is a God, but we cannot define or describe him, or set forth in scientific form his nature and attributes. He remains wholly mysterious and unapproachable to our understanding. "The way in which the reason apprehends this reality is not revealed to the understanding. In the latter there is reflected only the confidence of the reason, and an unconquerable feeling takes the place of perception. When the effort is made to transform this feeling, these invisible visions or intuitions, into visible images, or to make of the first hand certainty, which in default of a better word we call faith, a mere second hand certainty, of an unconditioned a conditioned con-

[1] *David Hume über den Glauben:* Jacobi's *Sämmtliche Werke,* Vol. II, p. 107 ff.

viction, there arises in the former case fanaticism, in the latter empty formalism, an impossible philosophy through mere logic." [1]

Jacobi had many followers, the most important of whom were the philosopher Fries and the theologian DeWette. In his *Neue Kritik der Vernunft* (published in 1807), the former says: "For a long time all philosophy has been controlled by the notion that everything must be proved, if it is to be regarded as true. The effort was made to prove an eternal reality of things, the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God from something that was not eternal, nor free, nor divine, but was supposed to have been already demonstrated. We can easily see that this endeavor was entirely misplaced. The truth of what we have to prove must already be implicit in the premise from which we take our departure. Proof gives us nothing new, but only makes the matter clearer. But how can eternity, freedom and God be in the finite premises from which we wish to prove

[1] *Von den Göttlichen Dingen: Sämmtliche Werke,* Vol. III, p. 441. In connection with Jacobi reference may also be made to the intellectual intuitionalism of Schelling, who at bottom agreed with Jacobi in spite of his sharp polemic against him; to the irrationalism of Schopenhauer, who maintained that the real essence of things—the underlying will—can be grasped only in the immediate intuition of self-consciousness; and to one of the most notable phenomena of our day, the philosophy of Henri Bergson, who insists that not by reflective reason, but only by intuition, which is akin to instinct rather than intelligence, can we penetrate beneath the surface and apprehend life in its unity and continuity.

them? God, freedom and eternity are ultimate conditions of our knowledge, out of which we can prove many things, but which are themselves subject to no proof. We must therefore entirely abandon the presupposition that everything can be proved." [1] And in his *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung,* of 1805, he says, "The world under natural law is the only thing about which we know; to the eternal we attain only through faith; but this faith we connect necessarily with our knowledge of the temporal when we recognize our existence in both worlds and assume that our will, which appears in our inner nature, is yet at the same time free. It is thus clear that we pass from knowledge to faith through the consciousness of our freedom. Our meaning, however, is not that we are able from this self-consciousness, out of the mere idea of the freedom of the will and moral obligation, to draw a proof, whether speculative or moral, of the reality of the eternal good in general, or of the existence of God; but on the contrary through it we only uncover in ourselves the heart of our consciousness which expresses itself immediately in the belief in the highest good. We set this belief in the highest good directly over against knowledge and take it then as a mere consequence that we who find ourselves in both worlds can regard our knowledge only as an appearance of the eternal itself." [2]

While Fries accepted the essence of Jacobi's faith

[1] Second edition (1829), Vol. I, p. 337 ff.

[2] *Wissen, Glaube und Ahndung,* edited by L. Nelson (1905), p. 61 ff.

philosophy, he yet regarded himself as a disciple of Kant, and hence was careful to insist that we do not know objective reality, either material or spiritual, as it is in itself, but only as it appears to us. We know that spiritual objects exist corresponding to our necessary ideas (whose necessity, like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Fries deduced from their universality), as we know that natural objects exist corresponding to the phenomena of sense perception. But we cannot know them in themselves in the one case any more than in the other. In the recognition of this fact, he claimed, lay the difference between the critical philosophy and traditional dogmatism, as also between it and the position of Schelling, who claimed to have through intellectual intuition an immediate knowledge of the absolute as it is in itself.

To the quotation from Fries may be added the following passages from DeWette's *Vorlesungen über die Religion,* published in 1827: "It is the greatest discovery of modern philosophy that the highest truths cannot be proved but only believed, and that all wisdom springs from fundamental principles which are assumed outright." [1] "The ideas of eternity, and immortality, of the Deity, of a holy world order, and the complete victory of the good, we grasp immediately in feeling, and only afterward clarify them by our understanding." [2] "When we speak of the feeling in which the source of religion lies, we understand by it not something physical, but a spiritual faculty which

[1] P. 44.
[2] Ibid., p. 102.

is practically the same for our inner life as the sense of touch is for our external knowledge. This sense gives us immediate but dark impressions of natural objects which need to be cleared up by the sense of sight. Only when we look at it, have we a clear perception of the tree we have touched. Feeling tells us that the tree is there, that its trunk is rough or smooth, large or small, but it gives us no clear picture of all its parts such as we get from the sense of sight. Similarly the inner, spiritual feeling gives us immediate and certain but vague knowledge. As the outer sense of feeling is related to the eye, so the inner to the understanding." [1]

A position identical with Jacobi's was represented in England by his younger contemporary Coleridge. His familiar distinction between the reason and the understanding, at times modeled upon Kant's notion of the practical reason, was at other times exactly that of Jacobi between the "Vernunft" and the "Verstand." "It has been made evident," he says, "(1) that there is an intuition or *im*mediate beholding, accompanied by a conviction of the necessity and universality of the truth so beholden, not derived from the senses, which intuition, when it is construed by pure sense, gives birth to the science of mathematics, and, when applied to objects supersensuous or spiritual, is the organ of theology and philosophy; and (2) that there is likewise a reflective and discursive faculty, or mediate apprehension which, taken by itself and uninfluenced by the former, depends on the senses for the materials

[1] Ibid., p. 70 ff.

on which it is exercised, and is contained within the sphere of the senses." [1] "Understanding is the faculty of reflection. Reason of contemplation. Reason, indeed, is much nearer to sense than to understanding: for reason (says our great Hooker) is a direct aspect of truth, an inward beholding, having a similar relation to the intelligible or spiritual, as sense has to the material or phenomenal." [2]

Though Coleridge does not refer to Jacobi in connection with his distinction between the reason and the understanding, it is clear from these passages that it is identical with the German philosopher's. The reason, as he defines it, is a faculty of direct vision by which we immediately apprehend spiritual realities; in other words it is what Jacobi called sometimes "Glaube" and sometimes "Vernunft." [3]

The same distinction was made much of also by the New England transcendentalists. Emerson was but expressing a common opinion when he uttered the familiar words: "There is no doctrine of the Reason which will bear to be taught by the Understanding." [4]

[1] *Aids to Reflection,* Shedd's edition of Coleridge's Works, (1854), Vol. I, p. 252 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 246.

[3] Coleridge at times, particularly under the influence of romanticism, interpreted reason in a larger sense, as including the whole intellectual and spiritual nature of man, and again he interpreted it as universal divine reason in which the individual participates (see, for instance, *The Statesman's Manual,* appendix B). But this in no way affects the significance of the particular contrast which, in agreement with Jacobi, he commonly drew between the reason and the understanding.

[4] Harvard Divinity School Address (1838).

The position, that man possesses a higher faculty of vision, whatever it may be called, by which he immediately perceives God and spiritual realities, has been very common during the last century in England, as in other countries.[1] A few illustrations must suffice. The famous Cambridge theologian, Julius Hare, in his *Victory of Faith,* published in 1829, refers to "the faculty in man through which the spiritual world exercises its sway over him"; [2] and says of faith: "In all the works of the creation, in the whole order and course of the world, it sees and feels and acknowledges the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead." [3] And again, "Our reason, when rightly employed, may discern many speculative truths. Until they are substantiated, however, and vivified by Faith, they exercise no practical influence on our lives. It is not written, that we stand by Reason, but that we *stand by Faith.* It is not written, that the just live by Reason, but that *the just live by Faith.* By Reason no man ever lived, no man ever stood. For we cannot stand upon ourselves. We cannot breathe in a vacuum. We must have something to stand on, something to breathe; and this we receive from Faith." [4]

Francis W. Newman, brother of the better known Cardinal, but, unlike him, a radical in his religious

[1] For examples see Caldecott's *Philosophy of Religion in England and America;* Chapter X: *Intuitivism or Mysticism.*

[2] Third edition (1874), p. 71.

[3] Ibid., p. 101.

[4] Ibid., p. 144.

thinking, called the soul "the organ of specific information to us respecting things spiritual." [1] And James Martineau declared that "in the very constitution of the human soul there is provision for an immediate apprehension of God." [2]

Still more recently Bishop Westcott, in striking agreement with Jacobi, says: "Questioning, then, my own experience, and interpreting, so far as I am able, the life of others, as it falls under my observation, I hold that the assumption which I have made, that as men we necessarily recognize these three existences, self, the world, and GOD, is fully justified. The conviction rests ultimately on my personal consciousness; but, as far as I can see, my fellow-men act under the influence of the ideas which I distinguish by these names. . . . I am conscious of 'self.' I feel—I know, that is, immediately with the most certain assurance which I can realize—that I am something more than a collection of present sensations or thoughts. . . . I am conscious also of 'the world.' I feel, that is, that there is outside me something finite, by which I am affected in various ways. . . . I am conscious in the third place of God." [3] "The proof of Revelation is then primarily personal. It springs from a realized fellowship with the unseen which we are enabled to gain. The two complementary statements, *credo ut intelligam* (*fides praecedit intellectum*) and *intelligo ut credam,* are both true at

[1] *The Soul* (1849), p. 3.
[2] *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (1890), p. 651.
[3] *The Gospel of Life* (1892), p. 4 ff.

different points in the divine life. The one applies to the groundwork; the other to the superstructure; the one describes the apprehension of the fundamental facts; the other describes the expression of doctrines. Faith obtains the new data for reasoning, but when the data are firmly held, then the old methods become applicable. Historical facts convey new lessons when regarded in the light of the revealed relation of GOD to the world; and, within certain limits, we can express conclusions in human language which present the truth adequately for us. The data do not modify these methods, but increase the materials to which they are applicable." [1]

Meanwhile faith was undergoing rehabilitation along another line opened by Kant.[2] As already said, the critical philosophy meant the denial of the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God, or of any transcendent realities. We can know only phenomena; all else is hidden from us. We have seen how Jacobi rescued himself from this scepticism by means of the philosophy of feeling. Our understandings are incapable of reaching reality, but we have a higher faculty by which we may apprehend it directly.

To Kant this assumption seemed the height of unreason. And yet he, too, was unwilling to rest in complete scepticism; he, too, felt the reality of tran-

[1] Ibid., p. 83.

[2] In this and in some other parts of the book I have made free use of portions of my articles on *Modern Ideas of God* ("Harvard Theological Review" for January, 1908) and *The Pragmatism of Kant* ("Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods" for April 14, 1910).

scendent values, and was driven to vindicate a place for them in human belief. In his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* published in 1785, and in his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft,* published in 1788, he set forth the principle of the categorical imperative, and deduced from it the postulates of freedom, immortality, and God. The categorical imperative means: Do your duty, because it is your duty, and not from any other motive whatsoever. But this involves freedom. "A man judges that he can do a thing," Kant says, "because he is conscious that he ought to do it, and so recognizes in himself freedom which would have remained undiscovered by him, had it not been for the moral law." [1]

The consciousness, I ought, and the resultant conviction, I can, involve autonomy, or freedom, and so superiority to the phenomenal world of cause and effect. If the will were bound by extraneous motives it would not be free, but would be under the bond of necessity and only a link in the endless chain of causation. But to act solely in response to the sense of ought, to set aside all other considerations and obey the categorical imperative of duty, is to give a law to oneself, is to be autonomous and hence free. "I declare that every being which cannot act otherwise than under the idea of freedom is on that account, viewed practically, actually free; that is, all the laws which are inseparably bound up with freedom are applicable to it just as much as if theoretical philosophy

[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft; Sämmtliche Werke,* Vol. II, p. 39.

had declared it free. Now I assert that we must necessarily ascribe to every rational being that has a will the idea of freedom under which alone it acts. For in such a being we assume a reason which is practical, that is, has causality in reference to its objects. . . . The reason must look upon itself as the author of its own principles, independent of foreign influences; and consequently, as practical reason, or as the will of a rational being, must look upon itself as free, that is, the will of a being can be its own will only under the idea of freedom; and hence freedom must, from the practical point of view, be ascribed to all rational beings." [1] And again, "Thus categorical imperatives are possible because the idea of freedom makes me a member of a rational world. If I were that alone, all my actions would always be in accord with the autonomy of my will. But since I am at the same time also a member of the sensible world, I recognize that they *ought* to be in accord therewith." [2] This gives our categorical imperative, our sense of ought. Thus Kant arrives at freedom as a necessary postulate of moral activity.

In a similar way he reaches also the postulates of immortality and God. We see inevitably by the law of our practical reason that virtue should lead to happiness. The combination of virtue and happiness we recognize as the highest good by the very necessity of our moral nature or by the law of our practical

[1] *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten;* ibid., Vol. III, p. 76 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 83.

reason. But this recognition of the highest good as the combination of virtue and happiness leads to immortality, for only through an endless progression can virtue reach perfect realization, and so the first and necessary element in the highest good be realized. "The accomplishment of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determined by the moral law. In this, however, the complete conformity of the disposition to the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. It must consequently be possible as truly as its object is, for it is included in the same command to promote the latter. But the complete conformity of the will to the moral law is holiness, a perfection of which no rational being in the sensible world is capable at any moment of its existence. But, since it is nevertheless demanded as practically indispensable, it can be reached only in an endless progress toward perfect conformity. And it is therefore necessary, according to the principles of the pure practical reason, to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will. This endless progress, however, is possible only on the assumption of the endless existence and the personality of the same rational being, which is called the immortality of the soul." [1]

Similarly the conception of the highest good leads us to postulate God, for only a supreme moral being can make virtue lead to happiness, that is, only such a being can supply the second element of the highest good. "Happiness is the condition of a rational being

[1] *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, p. 156.

in the world when everything throughout his life goes in accordance with his wish and will. It therefore depends upon the harmony of nature with his whole purpose and likewise with the essential motive which controls his will. But the moral law, as a law of freedom, issues its commands by means of motives which must be entirely independent of nature and of its harmony with our desires. A rational being, active in the world, is not, however, at the same time the cause of the world and of nature. Consequently, in the moral law there is not the least ground for a necessary connection between virtue and the corresponding happiness of a being who is a part of the world and therefore dependent upon it. . . . Nevertheless, in the practical problem of the pure reason, that is, in the required labor for the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: it is our duty to seek to promote the highest good which must therefore be possible. Hence the existence of a cause of all nature, different from itself, must be postulated which contains the ground of this connection; that is, of the exact correspondence of happiness and virtue." [1]

Thus to postulate God and immortality is not a duty—no man is under obligation to assume the existence of anything—but it is a need. We are driven to it by the demands of our practical reason. Our duty is only to labor for the realization of the highest good; our need is to postulate immortality and God that the highest good may be realized. This highest

[1] Ibid., p. 159.

good, which is the supreme end of creation, and which Kant calls the Kingdom of God, is not happiness, but virtue with the happiness corresponding thereto.

The significance of Kant's position did not lie in the particular interpretation he gave of the highest good or in the particular way in which he deduced his postulates of God and immortality. As a matter of fact, few have found either the one or the other satisfactory. It lay, rather, in his general method of postulating spiritual realities on the basis of the needs of our moral nature, instead of proving them by theoretical reason or discovering them by the eye of faith. In such postulation we are active, not merely passive. We exercise our wills. The needs of our moral nature demand certain faiths, and we create them for ourselves instead of waiting for them to be given us. In his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* Kant says, "Granted that the pure moral law absolutely binds everyone, not as a prudential rule, but as a command, then the right-minded man may well say: I will that there be a God; that my existence in this world be also an existence outside the chain of nature in a pure world of the understanding; finally that my existence be endless. I insist on this, and will not permit this belief to be taken from me." [1] If one should say there is no evidence for the existence of God, no proof of divine purpose in the world, we might reply in the spirit of Kant: We will put purpose there; we will give the world meaning which we cannot discover in

[1] Ibid., p. 182.

it. This is to be religious. Faith in God is an heroic deed, not simply passive acquiescence. We make a moral purpose supreme, and we read it into the universe, and thus find God for ourselves. Religion is a creative act of the moral will, as knowledge, according to Kant, is a creative act of the understanding. Only as we stamp purpose on the world and give it ethical meaning, or, in other words, only as we believe in a God of moral purpose, can we live our highest lives and be true to ourselves. This is the real significance of Kant's religious philosophy.

Kant's disciple, Fichte, while criticizing the eudæmonism of his conception of God and the Kingdom of God, yet followed a similar method of postulation. We need God, not in order to guarantee the ultimate union of virtue and happiness, as Kant had thought, but in order to guarantee the victory of virtue. In agreement with Kant, Fichte shows that we cannot argue from the world to a rational creator, or to a world-ruler, but can reach God only through our moral nature. I find myself free from the control of the world of sense and raised above it. As a free being I possess a purpose to which I give myself. I cannot doubt my freedom and I cannot doubt my purpose without denying myself.

'The conviction that I am free and am called to accomplish a purpose is faith, and hence the element of moral certainty is faith. To set myself an object is the same as to set it before me as actually accomplished in some future time. If I will not deny myself, I must assume the possibility of its accomplishment. If

I ought I can. The ought is given immediately and necessarily involves the can. This is a categorical imperative, and is based on nothing else. The world, including my existence and that of others, is the common theater of morality. It constitutes a scene for the exercise of freedom, but itself has not the slightest influence on freedom. The free moral will is above all nature. "That the rational object shall be realized," Fichte says, "can be brought about only through the activity of a free being. But it will surely be realized in accordance with a higher law. Right doing is possible, and every circumstance contributes to it through that higher law." [1] "This is the true faith; this moral order is the divine which we assume. It is built through right doing. This is the only possible confession of faith, joyfully and without restraint to do what each one ought to do without doubting and troubling oneself about the consequences. In this way this divine becomes living and actual to us." [2]

There is an interesting recent reproduction of Fichte's position in Rauwenhoff's *Religionsphilosophie,* published in 1894. Religion is faith in the moral order of the universe. The man who follows the dictates of his moral ideals will find himself and the universe at one. This or a similar form of ethical theism, as a matter of fact, is very common to-day,

[1] *Ueber den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung; Sämmtliche Werke,* Vol. V, p. 184.
[2] Ibid., p. 185.

even where its connection with Kant and Fichte is not recognized.[1]

There are, of course, two diverse ways of reaching faith in a moral order of the universe. We may discover in our own experience, or through the study of history and the lives of other men, that there is such a moral order, that the world is in the hands of a moral God; or, we may postulate God in spite of observation and experience, or independently of them. Our moral living, we may say, demands such faith, and we will believe whatever the verdict of sense may be. But this very method of postulation involves the belief that the venture will be justified in experience; that what we have accepted on trust in order to be true to our own highest self will be vindicated in days to come; so that postulation will be followed by verification, the true pragmatic method.

And this leads me to say a few words about current pragmatism, which owes so much to the writings of William James and in which the method of postulation that took its rise with Kant finds its most striking and consistent contemporary expression. According to the pragmatist, if he be a theist, God is a postulate, or an assumption, based wholly on practical grounds. We do not discover him in the universe, or deduce him from the universe; we do not find him in our own experience, or argue back to him from our possession of a moral nature, moral standards and ideals; we cannot demonstrate his existence, or come

[1] Cf. Caldecott's *Philosophy of Religion in England and America*, p. 72 ff.

into conscious touch with him; but our spiritual or moral needs demand a God, and we assume that God is, and live our lives accordingly. If the assumption works, if our faith vindicates itself in experience, we have the strongest kind of proof, the only possible proof of God.

Faith in God, therefore, according to the pragmatist, is always a venture. We may not discover meaning in the world as we gaze upon it, or as its manifold life unrolls itself before our eyes. It may seem only a complex of blind and conflicting forces. Everything looks like the mere play of chance. Conclusive evidence that the race is growing better, or that there is a moral order of the universe, is difficult to find. But we resolve that the world shall have meaning for us, that it shall be a moral world in which our moral purposes shall be accomplished and our moral ideals realized, and we live our lives under the compulsion of this resolve. This is to have faith in God, and the only kind of faith that is real, according to the pragmatist; not the faith of passive acquiescence or consent, but the creative faith of active purpose and effort.

The world is plastic in our hands. It is not offered to us ready made and complete with the moral values all there and the spiritual purposes already realized. It is given us to make of it what we will. We may find God in it, if we live by the postulate that He is there, or we may never discover Him if we stand off and wait for him to reveal himself. The religious man, according to the pragmatist, is he who makes

the postulate, who dares to venture faith in God and to live his life thereby. And he has proved his faith who finds it livable, who finds his moral purposes realizable and his reading of the world in moral terms justified. But the venture cannot wait upon the proof; we must believe ere we can know that our belief will vindicate itself as sound.

The genuine pragmatist holds his faiths modestly. He recognizes that truth is at best only relative, not absolute, for experience is finite and always growing. He knows that a test which shall be certainly valid for all men and for all time is not to be had, and hence he looks with charity on those who do not share his faith. But his breadth of tolerance is not indifference. Believing that the good ought to be, he determines that it shall be, and his life to make it real is the measure of his faith. Faith in God is no easy and indolent and comfortable thing, costing nothing and demanding scarcely more, but a hard and heroic deed, to be won only by God-like living and striving.

Congenial to many a modern man is the reality of the faith thus gained and tested. Fruit of human need as it is, it matches the need from which it springs, and it appeals not to tradition, or authority, or foreign testimony, but to the experience of each man whose it is. It makes no extravagant and unverifiable claims. It utters no dogmas. It embodies itself in no creeds for the acceptance of others. To him who has it, it is all-sufficient and satisfying, and asks no proof from without. It demands only that as it was won, in the same way it shall be kept, by

living a life which fulfills God's good purposes, and so makes him sure.

The question inevitably forces itself upon us, how does pragmatism attain to objective reality in the theistic sphere? The answer is: Just as in any other sphere, by postulation and by testing the postulate in experience. We assume the real existence of the other men whom we see day by day, and the assumption works. If we assume the existence of our dream men, the assumption does not work, and we discover that they are not real. We cannot see God; it is not a God we can look upon that our ethical needs require us to postulate; and we should not expect to test his reality, either now or in another world, by the organs of sight. But, if now and in all the ages to come our postulate of God vindicates itself in our experience and in the experience of those of our fellows who also believe in him—if it vindicates itself, that is, in our common social experience—there can be no completer proof that God is.

An interesting combination of what may be called the pragmatic method—though he did not call it so—and the historical, is found in the theism of the most influential theologian of the late nineteenth century, the German Albrecht Ritschl. We belong, so Ritschl says, to two worlds, the world of things and the world of ideals. Faith in God is due to our need of winning the victory for our ideals, of asserting ourselves as free spiritual beings, superior to the world of sense, for Ritschl was very fond of insisting that man is worth more than the whole world. We cannot thus

assert ourselves, except by faith in a realm of spiritual values to which we belong, and in which we live. "In all religion," Ritschl says, "the effort is made, with the help of the exalted spiritual power which man worships, to overcome the contradiction in which he finds himself as a part of the world of nature, and as a spiritual personality which claims to rule nature. For, on the one hand, man is a part of nature, helpless over against it, dependent upon and limited by external things. But, on the other hand, as spirit, he feels himself driven to assert his independence over against such things. In this situation religion arises as the belief in exalted spiritual powers, through whose help the power which resides in the man himself is in some way supplemented, or raised to a complete whole of its kind, sufficient to withstand the pressure of the natural world." [1]

And again: "Man is a part of the world, and that not merely as a physical being conditioned by it, but also as an individual spirit. Nevertheless, as spirit, he distinguishes himself from the world, wins by means of the idea of God the conception of his own value over against the world, and in the Christian religion raises himself to the conviction that the worth of his spiritual personality surpasses that of the whole realm of nature." [2]

Thus Ritschl started with the method of postulation. God to him, as to Fichte, was made necessary

[1] *Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, third edition, Vol. III, p. 189 ff.

[2] Ibid., p. 585.

by our character as free moral beings, in order to guarantee the victory of the ideal for which we live. But he went beyond Fichte in finding historical verification for his faith in the figure of Jesus Christ. In him, according to Ritschl, we see a man who actually won the victory over the world which we are striving after, by faith in a God whom he called his Father and by devotion to that Father's will. The victory won by such faith and devotion—a victory which we, too, may win—is the strongest possible guarantee of the existence of the divine purpose which we make our own when we thus live. That purpose is the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth; not a combination of virtue and happiness lying beyond our temporal existence, but the reign of righteousness and goodness in this world of ours. For the promotion of this it is the duty of every man to labor. We win the completest victory over the world, not by asserting ourselves against it, but by promoting the Kingdom of God within it; we conquer the world by serving it. This was Ritschl's combination of ethics and religion, and this, he claimed, was the message of Jesus Christ.

We are reminded here of the position of Matthew Arnold, who also felt the influence of Kant and Fichte, and represented, though independently, a tendency similar to Ritschl's. "That Jesus *is* the Son of a Great Personal First Cause," Arnold says, "is itself unverifiable; and that there *is* a Great Personal First Cause is unverifiable, too. But that there *is an enduring* power, not ourselves, which makes for righteous-

ness is verifiable, as we have seen, by experience; and that Jesus *is* the offspring of this power is verifiable from experience also. For God is the author of righteousness; now, Jesus is the Son of God because he gives the method and secret by which alone is righteousness possible. And that he *does* give this, we can verify, again, from experience. It *is* so! try, and you will find it to be so! . . . And, therefore, as we found we could say to the masses: 'Attempt to do without Israel's God that makes for righteousness, and you will find out your mistake!' so we find we can now proceed farther, and say: 'Attempt to reach righteousness *by any way except that of Jesus,* and you will find out your mistake!' " [1]

The great significance of this whole line of theism is that God is found in the realm of values; that he is interpreted primarily as moral purpose and influence rather than as substance; and also that he is reached neither by theoretical demonstration nor by mystical vision, but by the exercise of the moral will.

The rehabilitation of faith, which has been illustrated in this chapter, is of immense importance and marks a new era in religious thought. Particularly is this true of the line of treatment initiated by Kant. In general the abandonment, both by Jacobi and Kant, of the attempt to find theoretical proofs of the existence of God and spiritual realities, and the substitution of another method of approach, was epoch-making in its effects. Jacobi, however, and those who followed him only returned to an old and

[1] *Literature and Dogma,* Chapter X.

common position in making faith a faculty of direct perception and resorting to it in the face of the failure of the understanding to rise above the world of sense. But Kant's attitude and the pragmatic tendency which took its rise with him were new. The position has been approached now and then—Christ's words, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," are often quoted as an example of it—but it has never been clearly set out until modern times. In it, without question, an increasing number are finding satisfaction. It has been promoted by the modern development of psychology, which has contributed to the rapid growth of voluntarism. In general the whole tendency means the breaking of the bonds of intellectualism, or, in other words, the recognition that the intellect is not the only road to truth, a fact of the very greatest significance. The recognition of this marks perhaps the profoundest difference between our own age and the eighteenth and earlier centuries. Whether in dogmatism or in rationalism, the intellect was formerly in full control in philosophy. Kant's greatest significance lay in his break with this age-long prejudice, and his recognition of the equal rights of the emotional and voluntary side of man's nature. This meant the coming of a new age, both in philosophy and in theology. It was held back for a long time by the intellectualism of Hegel, but since the influence of the latter has waned, it has begun to come into its own.

CHAPTER VIII

AGNOSTICISM

NOTHING is more striking in the attitude of thinking men to-day than their agnosticism touching many matters about which in other days they were wont to dogmatize with complete assurance. The criticism of Hume, and particularly of Kant, served to reveal the unsoundness of the old dogmatism, negative as well as positive. The supraphenomenal or noumenal world is quite inaccessible to the human understanding. As seen in the chapter on the critical philosophy, this principle was employed by Kant to show the futility of all theoretical proofs of the divine existence, but he used it also to show with equal clearness, that the existence of God could not be disproved. The same line of reasoning which forces the former conclusion upon us compels us, according to Kant, to recognize the latter as well. "The same grounds by which the incapacity of human reason to assert the existence of such a being is made evident necessarily suffice to prove the vanity of every denial of it. For whence by mere theoretical reason shall one draw the certainty that no supreme being exists as the basis of everything that is?" [1]

[1] *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, p. 547.

The soundness of this position has been generally recognized since Kant's day, and as a result agnosticism has widely taken the place of atheism. The growth of the scientific spirit has tended in the same direction, to restrain thinking men from going beyond the facts and asserting what cannot be proved, whether it be by way of negation or of affirmation. Dogmatic atheism is now generally recognized to be as unscientific as dogmatic theism. Here and there is to be found dogmatism, both religious and anti-religious, as extreme and intolerant as ever, but it is decidedly exceptional in cultivated circles, and, as a rule, educated men vie with one another in the modesty with which they disclaim the right to make any positive assertions touching realities lying beyond the realm of phenomena.

The intellectual humility which finds expression in agnosticism is in striking contrast with eighteenth century assurance and certitude. Then the educated world prided itself on its knowledge, and was impatient and even contemptuous of all so-called mysteries. The title of John Toland's little book—*Christianity not Mysterious*—which appeared in 1706, is a capital illustration of the spirit of his age, the age of an imperious and self-confident rationalism. The conviction, that the whole realm of existence could be explored and all secrets laid bare, was not unnatural at a time when men were rapidly emancipating themselves from the trammels of the past, and were making hitherto undreamed of progress in the study of the world of nature. But the very vastness of the

new knowledge, with the ever-enlarging and limitless vistas which it opened in all directions, served to check the early assurance, and contributed to the growth of a new humility. The result was an enhanced appreciation of the unfathomable depths of reality and the insoluble mysteries of existence which had been almost lost sight of for some generations. It is true that agnosticism in its polemic against the intrenched dogmatism of traditional theology has often given scant evidence of the possession of the spirit of humility. Many an alleged agnostic, indeed, has been as dogmatic in his negations as the veriest gnostic in his affirmations. But this should not blind us to the real essence of agnosticism. As a declaration that the powers of the human mind are limited, and that there are regions forever inaccessible to human knowledge, it stands, at any rate theoretically, in contrast with philosophical rationalism and theological dogmatism, for intellectual humility.

The word agnostic was coined by Huxley in 1869, but the attitude which it was intended to denote had long been common. It first found elaborate and systematic formulation in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century in the positivism of the French philosopher August Comte. According to Comte, we can know only phenomena. The realm of supraphenomenal reality is wholly closed to us. We can deal with given facts and their relations one to another, but the inner nature of things, the first cause and the final purpose of all existence, we can know nothing about. Our knowledge is, therefore, wholly relative.

Absolute knowledge or knowledge of an absolute is quite unattainable. To reach the recognition of this fact has required, so Comte taught, a long development. In the childhood of the race, its theological period, phenomena were traced to the activity of invisible personal beings; later, in its metaphysical period, which has its parallel in the youth of the individual, all was accounted for by abstract principles or ideas which were hypostatized and given reality as natural forces of one kind and another; finally, in the positivistic period, the age of maturity, such explanations have been abandoned and scientists confine themselves to observation and experiment, to the study of phenomena and the empirical laws under which they occur and by which they are connected. Thus religion and metaphysics give way to positive science in which the limitations of the human mind are for the first time respected and sound knowledge is substituted for the vanities and vagaries of speculation.

In accordance with his principles Comte declared it to be quite impossible to know anything about the existence of God. We are justified neither in asserting nor in denying his reality. Theism and atheism are alike unwarranted. We must be content with complete ignorance touching all that transcends phenomena. This need not distress us, for we may know all we need to know in order to live our lives happily, successfully, and usefully in this phenomenal world. The way in which Comte undertook in later years to meet his own religious needs and those of others with

his religion of humanity with its extraordinary development of cult and hierarchy need not detain us. Its influence was slight and temporary, but his agnosticism, which alone concerns us here, was of the very greatest significance, and its effects were widely felt, both within and without France.

A similar tendency, partly the fruit of Comte's positivism, partly of independent origin, found its most notable English representatives in John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. The former, adopting the empiricism and phenomenalism of Hume, agreed with Comte in denying all knowledge of an absolute, or of spiritual realities lying beyond the bounds of experience, though in a volume entitled *Three Essays on Religion,* published after his death in 1874, he showed sympathy with theistic faith, and gave some weight to the argument from design in bearing evidence to the existence of a benevolent, but finite and limited deity. The essays close with the following interesting passage: "One elevated feeling this form of religious idea admits of, which is not open to those who believe in the omnipotence of the good principle in the universe, the feeling of helping God—of requiting the good he has given by a voluntary coöperation which he, not being omnipotent, really needs, and by which a somewhat nearer approach may be made to the fulfillment of his purposes. The conditions of human existence are highly favorable to the growth of such a feeling, inasmuch as a battle is constantly going on, in which the humblest human creature is not incapable of taking some part, between the pow-

ers of good and those of evil, and in which every, even the smallest, help to the right side, has its value in promoting the very slow and often almost insensible progress by which good is gradually gaining ground from evil, yet gaining it so visibly at considerable intervals as to promise the very distant but not uncertain final victory of Good. To do something during life, on even the humblest scale, if nothing more is within reach, towards bringing this consummation ever so little nearer, is the most animating and invigorating thought which can inspire a human creature; and that it is destined, with or without supernatural sanctions, to be the religion of the Future, I cannot entertain a doubt. But it appears to me that supernatural hopes, in the degree and kind in which what I have called rational scepticism does not refuse to sanction them, may still contribute not a little to give to this religion its due ascendency over the human mind."

Most renowned of all the modern representatives of agnosticism was Mill's younger contemporary, Herbert Spencer, whose synthetic philosophy has had extraordinary influence, not only in England and America, but in all parts of the civilized world, both east and west. The philosopher of evolution, who reached his belief in evolution independently of Darwin, he was also the most famous exponent of agnosticism. In the latter, however, he was much less thoroughgoing and consistent than Comte. Our knowledge is confined to phenomena. We cannot penetrate beyond them to things in themselves, either spiritual

or material. "Deep down in the very nature of life the relativity of our knowledge is discernible. The analysis of vital actions in general leads not only to the conclusion that things in themselves cannot be known to us; but also to the conclusion that knowledge of them, were it possible, would be useless." [1]

But we are driven by the relativity of phenomena to assume the existence of an absolute, or of an unknowable somewhat which underlies them and constitutes their cause. "We have seen how in the very assertion that all our knowledge, properly so called, is Relative, there is involved the assertion that there exists a Non-relative. We have seen how in each step of the argument by which this doctrine is established, the same assumption is made. We have seen how, upon the very necessity of thinking in relations, it follows that the Relative is itself inconceivable, except as related to a real Non-relative. We have seen that unless a real Non-relative or Absolute be postulated, the Relative itself becomes absolute; and so brings the argument to a contradiction. And on contemplating the process of thought, we have equally seen how impossible it is to get rid of the consciousness of an actuality lying behind appearances; and how, from this impossibility, results our indestructible belief in that actuality." [2]

All science, according to Spencer, presupposes an absolute which can never be brought within the range of observation or experiment, and a study of the

[1] *First Principles* (1864), p. 86.
[2] Ibid., p. 96.

religious history of the race convinced him that the absolute was also the background of all religions and their common term. In all of them awe is felt in the presence of an inscrutable mystery. A reconciliation of science and religion he therefore hoped might be effected by a recognition of this common factor. "Gradually as the limits of possible cognition are established, the causes of conflict will diminish. And a permanent peace will be reached when Science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative; while Religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute." [1]

Thus science and religion have to do with two altogether different territories, the former with that of the known, the latter with that of the unknown. Science moves in the realm of knowledge, religion in that of nescience. "Religion under all its forms is distinguished from everything else in this, that its subject matter is that which passes the sphere of experience." [2] It might be thought, consequently, that as scientific attainments increase the domain of religion will grow steadily smaller. But this was far from Spencer's thought. Science is like a sphere whose growth but enlarges its contact with surrounding nescience. And to explore this supraphenomenal region is in the very nature of the case forever impossible. A permanent function is therefore as-

[1] Ibid., p. 107.
[2] Ibid., p. 17.

sured to religion which no advances of science can ever take from it.

Spencer insisted earnestly upon the truly religious character of the recognition that the absolute is unknowable. "And yet this transcendent audacity, which claims to penetrate the secrets of the Power manifested to us through all existence—nay, even to stand behind that Power and note the conditions to its action—this it is which passes current as piety! May we not without hesitation affirm that a sincere recognition of the truth that our own and all other existence is a mystery absolutely and forever beyond our comprehension, contains more of true religion than all the dogmatic theology every written?" [1]

And yet, though it is wholly mysterious and inscrutable, there are, nevertheless, certain things which Spencer feels justified in saying about the absolute. It is power or energy, and it is infinite, eternal and omnipresent. Whether it is personal cannot be said. It may be as much above personality as the latter is above mere mechanical motion. But, in any case, we cannot commune with it, or come into conscious relation with it; we can only feel awe in the contemplation of it—the true religious feeling, whether shared by scientists or by devotees.

Spencer's agnosticism was thus not altogether consistent, for he assumed the existence of the absolute and assigned various attributes to it, while at the same time he pronounced it unknowable. But those who ridicule his inconsistency in this respect should

[1] Ibid., p. 112.

bear in mind the following striking passage: "Very likely there will ever remain a need to give shape to that indefinite sense of an Ultimate Existence, which forms the basis of our intelligence. We shall always be under the necessity of contemplating it as *some* mode of being; that is, of representing it to ourselves in *some* form of thought, however vague. And we shall not err in doing this, so long as we treat every notion we thus frame as merely a symbol, utterly without resemblance to that for which it stands. Perhaps the constant formation of such symbols and constant rejection of them as inadequate, may be hereafter, as it has hitherto been, a means of discipline. Perpetually to construct ideas requiring the utmost stretch of our faculties, and perpetually to find that such ideas must be abandoned as futile imaginations, may realize to us more fully than any other course, the greatness of that which we vainly strive to grasp. Such efforts and failures may serve to maintain in our minds a due sense of the incommensurable difference between the Conditioned and the Unconditioned. By continually seeking to know and being continually thrown back with a deepened conviction of the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness that it is alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as The Unknowable." [1]

As a matter of fact, Spencer's agnosticism was none the less influential because of its inconsistencies.

[1] Ibid., p. 113.

Indeed it expressed even better than Comte's more radical positivism the attitude of multitudes in the second half of the nineteenth century.

An agnosticism or scepticism identical in principle with that of Comte and Spencer and sometimes even more radical than the latter has been common in theological circles as well. Attention has already been called to the scepticism of the later medieval schoolmen, which was made the ground for an unquestioning submission to the authority of supernatural revelation. An interesting nineteenth century illustration of the same attitude was given by a prominent English churchman, Dean Mansel of St. Paul's, in his Bampton Lectures for 1852 on *The Limits of Religious Thought.*

Following the celebrated Scotch philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, Mansel asserted the complete inconceivability of the infinite or absolute. It is for human thought a tissue of contradictions, and, while it is necessary to assume its existence, it is impossible to know anything about it. "We are compelled, by the constitution of our minds, to believe in the existence of an Absolute and Infinite Being—a belief which appears forced upon us, as the complement of our consciousness of the relative and the finite. But the instant we attempt to analyze the ideas thus suggested to us, in the hope of attaining to a positive conception of the object denoted by them, we are on every side involved in inextricable confusion and contradiction." [1] "The *Absolute* and the *Infinite* are

[1] *The Limits of Religious Thought,* fifth edition (1870), p. 47.

thus, like the *Inconceivable* and the *Imperceptible,* names indicating, not a possible object of thought or of consciousness, but one exempt from the conditions under which human consciousness is possible. The attempt to construct in thought an object answering to such names, necessarily results in contradiction;—a contradiction, however, which we have ourselves produced by the attempt to think;—which exists in the act of thought, but not beyond it;—which destroys the conception as such, but indicates nothing concerning the existence or non-existence of that which we try to conceive. It proves our own impotence, and it proves nothing more. Or rather, it indirectly leads us to believe in the existence of that Infinite which we cannot conceive; for the denial of its existence involves a contradiction, no less than the assertion of its conceivability. We thus learn that the provinces of Reason and Faith are not co-extensive;—that it is a duty, enjoined by Reason itself, to believe in that which we are unable to comprehend." [1]

The conclusion of this passage recalls Jacobi's resort to faith. But Mansel differed with Jacobi in appealing to the authority of the Christian revelation; and he even went so far as to assert that reason is quite incompetent to pass judgment upon the character or contents of any alleged revelation. If an alleged revelation be attested by adequate evidence it must be accepted without question, even if it contradict our notions of truth and righteousness. [2]

[1] Ibid., p. 68 ff.

[2] Cf., e.g., ibid., pp. 126, 162.

One is inevitably reminded here of Hume's remark at the close of his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* that "to be a philosophical sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step toward being a sound, believing Christian."

Mansel's attitude in this matter is similar to Bishop Butler's, in his *Analogy,* but even more extreme. His purpose, indeed, was identical with Butler's, to defend Christianity by cutting the ground from under its opponents. But the method adopted was as dangerous as that of the older apologist.

Mansel's Lectures, which reproduced upon the basis of the modern critical philosophy the position of the late medieval schoolmen, of Pascal and Bayle in the seventeenth century, and of William Law in the eighteenth, owe their significance chiefly to the fact that they were the immediate source of the agnosticism of Spencer, who drew from them his doctrine of the unknowable. That they were influential in driving many into scepticism, there can be no doubt, though they were hailed by not a few English churchmen as the one sure way of stemming the rising tide of unbelief.

But, though Mansel's position was not an uncommon one, and is not now, he and others like him are not the most characteristic representatives of agnosticism within modern religious circles. His resort to authority and his unquestioning submission to it are uncongenial or impossible to most thinking men today. The typical religious phenomenon of our own times is rather the agnostic who is content to remain

wholly ignorant of many things which in other days men could not be happy without knowing. It has become easier than it once was to renounce absolute knowledge, or the knowledge of ultimate realities. On the one hand philosophy and science have so persistently preached the impossibility of such knowledge that we have widely ceased to concern ourselves about it; and on the other hand the realm of accessible phenomena has been so tremendously broadened and enriched that we find abundant employment for our best powers in its investigation.

Men are not so eager to proclaim themselves agnostics as they were a generation ago. The influence of Spencer, and of agnosticism as a specific and self-conscious movement, has decidedly waned. But in the more general sense just indicated agnosticism was never more widespread than it is to-day. Whether this is to be a permanent situation, is neither here nor there. At any rate it is the existing situation, and no one can at all understand modern religious ideas who fails to take account of it. A few representative thinkers may be referred to as examples of different degrees of agnosticism in the religious sphere. According to the philosopher Jacobi, as already seen, faith gives us the assurance of the existence of God, but it cannot attain to a clear knowledge of his nature and attributes. According to Schleiermacher, God is immediately present in the consciousness of the religious man, and is apprehended by feeling, but all attempts to penetrate to the inner nature of God, and to describe him as he is in himself are vain. All

we can know is our experience of God. And the same is true of the whole range of spiritual reality. We can know it as we find it in our own experience, but beyond that we cannot go. Jacobi and Schleiermacher are therefore not in the least agnostic as to the existence of God and the spiritual realm, but they both recognize that our knowledge of them is very limited.

Much more radical was the position of Kant. According to him God is postulated in order to effect the union of virtue and happiness, but it is not permissible to hypostatize God, and it is impossible either to come into personal relations with him or to attain any speculative knowledge of him. "Theoretically," so Kant says, "we do not by the strongest efforts of reason come at all nearer to the conviction of the existence of God, the reality of the highest good, and the prospect of a future life; for we possess no insight into the nature of supersensuous objects. Practically, however, we make these objects for ourselves, as we regard the idea of them helpful to our reason's ultimate aim." [1] God, the kingdom of God, and immortality are "ideas made by ourselves with a practical purpose, which must not be given theoretical value, or they will turn theology into theosophy, moral teleology into mysticism, and psychology into pneumatology, and so put things, a knowledge of which we might make use of in practical matters, over

[1] *Ueber die Fortschritte der Metaphysik seit Leibnitz und Wolff; Werke*, V. 3, p. 130.

into a transcendent sphere, where they are and remain entirely inaccessible to our reason." [1]

This means, to use a modern phrase, that the postulate of God is a value judgment, not an existential judgment. We assume the existence of God in order to validate and rationalize our moral living; but, having assumed his existence for this purpose, we have no right to give the idea independent objective validity, and make it the premise for conclusions of another sort altogether. As far as we are carried by the necessity which gives us God, we have a right to go, but no further.

According to Kant, in postulating God in order to bring about the ultimate union of virtue and the happiness corresponding therewith, we postulate him as the wise and powerful creator and ruler of the world, for otherwise he could not so control the world as to make it contribute to the happiness of the virtuous. We also postulate his holiness or supreme regard for virtue. Thus the God whom we assume has certain definite characteristics, and is not mere vague and undefined immensity. But he remains a moral postulate, and must not be employed as the foundation for metaphysical and scientific constructions.

The German theologian Ritschl followed Kant in regarding God as a postulate of the moral will and finding him in the sphere of values, as also in recognizing that we cannot transcend phenomena and know an absolute lying back of them. But he was enabled at the same time to assert the objective real-

[1] Ibid., p. 143. Cf. also his *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, §§ 88-90.

ity of God without abandoning the Kantian platform by accepting Lotze's modification of Kant's epistemology. In the third edition of his *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* he says: "In European culture we have to do with three forms of epistemology. The first arose under Plato's influence and prevailed in scholasticism. Wherever its influence extends we find the notion that, while the thing acts upon us, indeed, by means of its changing properties, and arouses our sensations and ideas, it is itself at rest behind its properties as an unchanging unity of attributes. The simplest example of this view in scholastic dogmatics is the exposition of the nature and attributes of God on the one side, and of God's activities in relation to the world and to the salvation of men on the other. The peculiarity of this theory of knowledge is also apparent in the fact that it is pretended that one can know the thing in itself before it acts. It is forgotten, namely, that the thing in itself is only the abiding picture derived from repeated observation of the operations which, in a particular place, have regularly affected our senses. The fault of this definition of the thing or object of knowledge is evident in the inconsistency that the thing is thought of as at rest and yet at the same time is supposed to work in its visible properties. The contradiction appears also in another form, that the thing at rest is represented as existing in a plane behind that in which its alleged properties are placed. It thus becomes impossible to understand these phenomena as qualities of the thing in itself which is

separated from them. The second form of epistemology was given us by Kant, who limited the knowledge of the understanding to the world of phenomena, but pronounced unknowable the thing or things in themselves in whose changing states the changes in the world of phenomena are grounded. The latter judgment contains a sound criticism of the scholastic interpretation of a thing. But the former is not sufficiently removed from scholasticism to escape its error. For a world of phenomena can be regarded as the object of our knowledge only when it is assumed that in them something real, namely, the thing, appears to us, or is the cause of our sensation and perception. Otherwise the phenomenon is only an illusion. Kant therefore contradicts by his use of the conception of phenomenon his proposition that real things are knowable. The third form of epistemology was taught by Lotze. We recognize in the phenomena which, in a definite place, undergo change to a limited extent and in a particular order, the thing as the cause of its properties which affect us, as the end which they serve as means, as the law of their regular alterations." [1] It was Lotze's theory of knowledge to which Ritschl gave his own assent.

Ritschl also gave content to his idea of God by appealing to the life and work of Jesus Christ, the revealer of God, so that in both ways he was less of an agnostic than Kant. But he was true to the lat-

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung,* third edition, Vol. III, p. 19 ff.

ter in confining the idea of God to the sphere of values and refusing to employ it for theoretical or speculative purposes. He was true to him also in his contention that theology in general has to do exclusively with judgments of value, which are distinguished from theoretical judgments, in that they state, not the objective nature or relations of things, but their worth to us. Religion is a practical matter, and theology is nothing more than the formulation of its principles, all of which are purely practical. Agnosticism touching all that transcends or is unrelated to our experience is, therefore, according to Ritschl, the only proper attitude for the theologian.

Agnosticism on the part of religious men appears in modern times not simply in connection with theism and not simply among the followers of Ritschl. It is very common in all religious circles, and affects many doctrines which were once asserted with complete assurance by all religious men. Notable among these is the doctrine of immortality. In the ancient and medieval church this was an absolutely fundamental belief, and never was its fundamental character more insisted upon than in the age of rationalism, when it was regarded by radicals as well as conservatives as one of the essential tenets of natural religion, established by human reason quite independently of a supernatural revelation. Kant associated it with God and freedom as an equally valid and necessary postulate of the practical reason. But Schleiermacher questioned its importance, and substituted for it the notion of eternal life as the present

consciousness of God. Ritschl, too, though less negative than Schleiermacher in his attitude toward personal immortality, defined eternal life as victory over the world even now and here. This aspect of it has been widely emphasized by modern theologians, eternal life being very commonly interpreted qualitatively instead of temporally. The religious interest having thus changed, a degree of agnosticism touching the future life is tolerable to religious men today, which would have been quite intolerable in other days. It is not an accident that in modern sermonic literature the subjects of heaven and hell bulk far less largely than they once did. In the absence of experimental proof few present-day thinkers are able to count immortality as other than a more or less well-grounded hope.[1]

In general the agnostic temper appears to-day not so much in scepticism touching this or that particular doctrine as in an instinctive unwillingness to dogmatize about matters lying beyond the confines of personal experience. Religious men hope and believe, perhaps, as much as they ever did, but they are more apt than in other days to distinguish their hopes and beliefs from proven facts and to refrain from insisting that they must be accepted by all men of sound mind and good will. That such agnosticism

[1] Many of the Ingersoll Lectures on immortality are significant in this connection. For an account of the history of the belief in immortality and of some of the grounds which have promoted the widespread indifference on the subject reference may be made to the admirable little book by William Adams Brown, entitled, *The Christian Hope* (1912).

is very common to-day within religious circles there can be no possible doubt, and the contrast between our own and earlier ages is in no respect more marked than in the fact that it is not simply a forced but a willing agnosticism.

This brief sketch of agnosticism might seem to suggest that it has had a wholly negative influence upon Christian faith, undermining traditional belief but contributing nothing positive to modern religious thought. This conclusion, however, is decidedly erroneous. For one thing agnosticism has served to shift the emphasis at many points, and in doing so has given new significance to certain ranges of religious value. As the power of the mind to know supraphenomenal reality has been denied, those matters which come within the range of experience have received new recognition, and particularly the practical side of religion has attained a greater prominence. In this is undoubtedly to be found one of the secrets of the widespread interpretation of Christianity in social terms, which is so marked a feature of present-day thought. The interest of modern Christians in the transformation of existing social institutions, or in their permeation with the spirit of Christ—a subject of which I shall speak more particularly in a later chapter—is intimately bound up with agnosticism touching the life of another world and the nature of ultimate reality, and is hardly to be understood apart from it. In general, attention to the near-at-hand, rather than the far-away, has been promoted by agnosticism, and, while those doctrines dealing with the far-away have as a consequence suffered eclipse,

those that have to do with the near-at-hand—with immediate duties and opportunities and with present sanctions and inspirations—have been greatly enriched. In blocking the path to the knowledge of transcendent things agnosticism has forwarded the search for spiritual values in the immediate present, and, as a result, the existence of such values, even within the framework of a finite, human, and mundane society, quite apart from its relation to infinity and eternity, has been convincingly demonstrated. In so far our conceptions of religion and of life have been enriched and traditional interpretations of both have been modified. That there has been no gain in all this it would be idle to assert, even though one were to think the gain more than overbalanced by the loss. At any rate, whether one laments or rejoices at the existing situation, the change of emphasis has already had large results, not only in Christian practice, but also in Christian theory, and it is bound in the future to have even larger.

CHAPTER IX

EVOLUTION

EVOLUTIONARY ideas were common among the Greeks, but in the Middle Ages they were almost wholly wanting. The account of the creation of the world in the early chapters of Genesis and of the preservation of animal life in the story of the flood controlled thought upon the subject, and it was taken for granted that the various existing forms of life had come directly from the hand of God. But it was inevitable, when the theological age of science had passed and men began to seek a natural explanation of the phenomena of nature, that the question of the origin of these multitudinous forms of life should again thrust itself upon the attention of thinking men. Descartes gave a wholly mechanical account of the world of nature, and even suggested the possibility of the production of the higher forms of life from the lower by a process of mechanical evolution. He was careful, however, to add that this was not his own opinion, but was put forth only as one among many conceivable hypotheses, thus protecting himself against the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Leibnitz, a generation later, enunciated what amounted to a doctrine of evolution on a large scale. The essence of his cosmology was the notion of immanent and ever-active force. For dead matter inert and moved only from without he substituted a matter all alive with energy. And he emphasized not simply the presence and constant activity of force, but also its continuity. There are no gaps in the universe, no points at which the operation of the indwelling forces stops and a new beginning has to be made under the impulse of an outside power. From the beginning to the end, from the bottom to the top, there is no break in the chain. Still further, there is constant progress in the universe; not a mere flux of advancing and receding forces, a chaos without end or aim, but a steady march toward the goal of perfection. The advance is slow, to be sure, and the forward steps are infinitesimally small, but they are also infinitely numerous, and hence the progress is real and continuous. Here was the secret of Leibnitz's optimism. Not that the universe is perfect, but that it is steadily though slowly moving toward perfection through the constant play of forces inherent in its very constitution. This, of course, was a doctrine of evolution on a large and massive scale.

In his own land the philosophy of Leibnitz was for long neither appreciated nor understood. Wolff, the systematizer and popularizer of it, in fixing his attention upon the criteria of reality which Leibnitz had simply taken over from Descartes, lost sight altogether of Leibnitz's real contributions, and he was

made in his hands the philosopher of rationalism in which artificial and external conceptions of the universe were carried to the farthest possible extreme. In France, however, he was read to better purpose by a number of thinkers of the eighteenth century, and the result was the rapid spread of the idea of evolution and its application on the one hand in the realm of physical science and on the other in that of human history. In various writings, published about the middle of the century, the idea of evolution appeared in an extreme and more or less fanciful form, and quite without scientific justification. So, for instance, in the works of Demaillet, Bonnet, and Robinet, who pictured an evolution of all life, including that of man, from the simplest forms of inorganic matter.

About the same time evolutionary ideas began to find somewhat guarded expression in the writings of the great French naturalist Buffon, and his pupil Lamarck, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, became an ardent champion of a thoroughgoing doctrine of biological evolution. In agreement with his English contemporary, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, who was also a convinced evolutionist, he found the principal factor of the process in the transmission of traits acquired through adaptation to environment. Because of his zealous advocacy, continued over thirty years, the whole notion of evolution came to be generally identified with his particular theory, and, while it gained some adherents, including the English

philosopher, Herbert Spencer, it suffered from his extreme and often grotesque hypotheses.

In Germany Goethe early adopted evolutionary ideas, and by scientific experiment, and even more by his poetry, promoted their currency among his countrymen. A wholesale doctrine of evolution was championed by his contemporary, the philosopher Schelling, in his *Naturphilosophie*. But Schelling, and after him Hegel, connected the evolution of nature with the notion of the absolute, and thus gave it a metaphysical character, which tended in the end to discredit it in the eyes of genuine scientists.

Meanwhile evolutionary ideas were becoming widely controlling in astronomy through the general acceptance of the nebular hypothesis of Kant and Laplace, as also in geology, where the labors of Hutton, and particularly of Lyell, broke down the old theory of catastrophism and the old idea of repeated creation. Lyell's epoch-making *Principles of Geology* appeared in 1830 and strengthened the case for biological evolution by supplying the analogy of a gradual development of the earth's surface, and also by furnishing fossil evidence of life upon the earth ages before it had been supposed to exist, and in many cases in such forms as to bridge apparently impassable chasms between existing species. Soon afterward came the establishment of the doctrine of the correlation of forces through the labors of Joule and others. All this, promoting, as it did, the belief in the unity of process and of force throughout nature, con-

tributed to the acceptance of the idea of evolution in every line.

One consideration still stood in the way of the notion of biological evolution. No principle had been discovered which seemed adequate to account for the differentiation of the infinitely varied forms of vegetable and animal life. Already in 1844 the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,* issued anonymously, but since attributed to Robert Chambers, had summarized the arguments for biological as well as for cosmical and geological evolution in very complete fashion, and had commanded wide attention. And in 1852 Herbert Spencer published an essay on *The Development Hypothesis* containing a powerful argument for the progressive evolution of the whole universe, including man and society. But in the absence of a plausible theory to render the process credible, most scientists still withheld their assent. In fact the current of scientific opinion, in reaction against the many unfounded conjectures and unsound conclusions of Lamarck and the metaphysical speculations of Schelling and Hegel, had for some time been setting in the opposite direction, when, in 1858, came the enunciation of the hypothesis of natural selection by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace, and in 1859 Darwin's *Origin of Species* supplied a wealth of evidence in favor of the hypothesis which at once put the whole subject of evolution on a new and higher plane.

Biological science was now in possession of what it had long been waiting for, a satisfactory explana-

tion of a vast mass of facts which had been steadily accumulating since the beginning of the century. The acceptance of Darwin's theory was immediate and widespread. It has since been supplemented and modified, and even rejected by many scientists. But in the meantime evolution has established itself as a well authenticated biological law, and the differences of opinion among scientific men have to do as a rule only with its method and with the forces that have brought it about. As a matter of fact, it is now seen that evolution is merely an expression of the law of continuity, which is a presupposition of all scientific proof. Continuity being once assumed, development in some form is a necessary consequence. And hence attacks upon any particular theory of evolution do not in the least weaken the scientific validity of the general conception.

As I have said there are many differences of opinion among scientists touching the method and the factors of evolution, but these differences have comparatively little significance for religious thought. Whether evolution is from within or without; whether it is a mere unfolding of that which already exists, or is creative of what is truly new; whether acquired traits are transmitted; whether the struggle for existence is the sole agency, or only one among many agencies in the evolutionary process; whether the struggle for the life of others is to be recognized as an equally important factor, as maintained by Henry Drummond in his Lowell lectures on *The Ascent of Man*—all this, from the point of view of the religious thinker,

is matter of minor concern. The main fact is not the currency of any particular theory of evolution and its factors, but the prevalence of the general belief in evolution, its all but universal acceptance by the mind of to-day.

The conception of evolution which became at length dominant, as has been seen, in the realm of biological science was carried over soon after the middle of the eighteenth century into the field of human history. The notion of progress was already a commonplace. With it was combined the idea of the continuity of immanent and ever-active force, and thus a genuine theory of human development was reached and the modern idea of history made possible. Reaction had already begun against the narrow and unhistorical rationalism of the age with its fixed and artificial standards. A love for classical antiquity was one of the first signs of the reaction, and it resulted in a second renaissance in Germany. Interest in the past thus started grew rapidly, but it was the idea of development that gave the new historical interest its formula, and out of it modern historical science was really born. The earliest important work revealing the new spirit in Germany was the *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts,* written or edited by Lessing and published in 1780. This little tract was epoch-making. It claimed that revelation is to the race what education is to the individual. Education is revelation, and revelation is education. From the beginning God has been training mankind by means of revelation. The Old Testament and the

New are simply stages in the process, but they are not final. Christianity itself is only a step in the evolution of the highest spiritual religion. God teaches men one great truth after another as they are ready for it, and at no period is the revelation final and complete. The principle of the development of humanity under divine leading controlled this little work, and though it was concerned particularly with the religious question, it had large effects in other lines as well.

Even more important was the influence of the theologian and poet Herder. According to him, nature and spirit are only the elements of one great organism which necessarily belong together and mutually condition each other. The lower exists for the sake of the higher and all for the sake of the whole. In a brief essay, published in 1774, and entitled *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte der Bildung der Menschheit,* he says: "Has there not been progress and development in a higher sense? The growing tree, the struggling man, must pass through various stages always progressing. But the striving is not simply individual and temporal, it is eternal. No one is alone in his age; he builds on what goes before. The past and the present are the bases of the future. This, the analysis of nature and of God's works in general, shows. Thus it is also with the human race. The Egyptian could not be without the Oriental; the Greek built on both; the Roman rose upon the shoulders of the entire world. Genuine progress, constant development, even if no individual gain anything there-

by, this is the purpose of God in history." It was in this spirit that Herder wrote his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit,* the first part of which was issued in 1784. Indeed, this elaborate and important work was simply an attempt to trace the development on a large scale, beginning with the very commencement of human life and endeavoring to show at every stage the forces which have affected and shaped the development. Herder anticipated both Schelling and Hegel in his evolutionary world view, and his influence upon modern thought has been far greater than is commonly realized.

Equally significant was the absolute idealism of Hegel with its conception of the universe both of nature and of man as a stage in the evolution of the self-consciousness of the absolute. His idea particularly of human history as the field for the self-realization of God gave a new dignity and fascination to historical study. In it, according to Hegel, the student is dealing not with mere fortuitous and meaningless events, succeeding one another without rhyme or reason, but rather with an orderly development proceeding according to well established laws and charged with eternal significance. It is not surprising that Hegel's theory of evolution did much to arouse an enthusiasm for history and so in spite of its *a priori* and artificial character to promote in the end the interests of historical science.

The changed conception of human history as a process of evolution, like the changed conception of nature, took increasing possession of the nineteenth

century, until it became everywhere dominant, and the older static notions in both spheres were almost completely crowded out. The general tendency, as has been seen, was much older than Darwinism, but the authority which the latter acquired in the scientific world gave the notion of evolution a new standing, and it speedily became controlling in every sphere. The result is that all our thinking to-day proceeds largely along evolutionary lines. Individuals and institutions are alike looked upon as organisms and as subject to the general laws of development. To understand existing forms of any kind we recognize that we must study their origin and trace their growth. The universe, as we know it, has not come ready made from the hand of a creator; in all its parts it is the fruit of a long and gradual process of evolution.

The influence of the idea of evolution within the realm of religious thought has been simply tremendous. At first it was widely resisted in the supposed interest both of religion and morality. And even when it came to be generally recognized that evolution has had a large place in the world, and that the human body and the so-called animal part of man's nature are its product, some thought and still think to save morality and religion by exempting the conscience and the soul from the general process and ascribing them to the immediate creative activity of God. But others have found it all the grander to believe that the whole man has risen from below and has attained control of the very nature which gave him birth. In fact the tendency even among the-

ologians is more and more to disregard the limits which were at first generally set to the process and to recognize it as universal in its scope.

Again, evolution was bitterly opposed by many religious men because it seemed to make divine creation unnecessary and hence to imperil theistic belief. Even scientists were in many cases prejudiced against it by this fear, and its general acceptance was rendered much more difficult. But it was soon realized that the idea of evolution is entirely compatible with theism. It detracted in no way from the greatness of God's work to suppose that he had created the germs from which all existing forms of life had subsequently developed in accordance with his eternal plan. As a matter of fact, even St. Augustine had thus pictured God's activity, and there was no reason why the most orthodox should not so interpret it. As a consequence, although opposition long continued in conservative circles, the new theory being regarded by many as inconsistent with the Biblical account of the creation of animals and particularly of man, it gradually made its way among theologians in all parts of the world. The scriptural narrative was then either reinterpreted to agree with the new hypothesis or was disregarded altogether.

Many thought to save the credit of the early chapters of Genesis by understanding the six days as ages of indefinite duration; or by substituting gradual for instantaneous creation, or the production of the original germ of life for the immediate creation of independent species. Others abandoned the attempt to

harmonize Scripture and science, and it became increasingly common to think of the creation narrative as a poem or allegory without scientific significance, or to regard it as a mere piece of primitive speculation concerning the origin of the world such as was common among the ancients. The discovery of similar traditions in the literatures of other Oriental peoples has strengthened the latter idea, and there are probably few Protestant theologians to-day who treat the early chapters of Genesis as sober history.

And not simply the interpretation of the Genesis stories but the general view of the Bible has been profoundly affected by evolution. The old notion of it as an immediate revelation from God, equally authoritative in all its parts, has widely given way to the recognition of it as a product of natural evolution. Scholars now trace the development of the religious ideas contained in it, and show the circumstances under which they have arisen and the influences by which they have been determined. The history of the Bible itself is studied like that of any other literature, and an understanding of it is sought by the use of the same methods as are employed elsewhere. The effect of all this upon the general doctrine of Biblical authority has of course been very great and will be referred to again in a later chapter.

Evolution has also promoted a revised estimate of the ethnic religions. In fact it has transformed our views of religious history as a whole. The old rationalistic notion of an original natural religion everywhere the same, from which men afterward de-

clined—a notion already attacked by Hume in the eighteenth century—has been finally and forever abandoned. Similarly the belief in a primitive divine revelation containing the eternal principles of religion and morality—a revelation of which the old theologians made so much—has been completely undermined. Now it is recognized that religion, like everything else, has developed from small beginnings, that fetichism and polytheism are older than monotheism, and that the latter has been due to the play and interplay of many and diverse forces. Here as everywhere else evolution leads men to look for perfection not in the past but in the future, and to measure the worth of existing principles and forms not by their agreement with the forms and principles of an earlier day, but by their fitness to promote the religious and moral progress of the race.

The theory of evolution, particularly in the forms given it by Darwin and other modern biologists, has also destroyed the force of the traditional theistic argument from design which urged the countless adaptations of organ to environment as proofs of a creative intelligence. Many theologians, however, find the evidence of design in a larger sense stronger than ever before. In the general process of evolution from lower to ever higher stages of existence they see the grandest possible manifestation of divine wisdom. To them the very idea of evolution suggests

> "One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

At this point theistic and atheistic or agnostic evolutionists as a rule part company. The former regard evolution as merely the way in which God works in producing all that is and is to come. They read the whole process as purposive, and while recognizing the mechanical nature of the agencies employed, they believe that its direction and goal are divinely planned. The latter, on the other hand, regard the whole thing as fortuitous. The end was not preconceived, nor the development foreseen. There has been on the whole progress rather than degeneration, but this is the natural result of the struggle for existence and involves neither beneficence nor wisdom.

Of course mere science cannot resolve a question like this. The decision between the two alternatives belongs wholly to faith. Science may discover natural causes adequate to account for all observed phenomena, but the believer, if he will, may interpret them theistically and no scientist can say him nay. Some who thus interpret the evolutionary process find their warrant for it in the process itself. But probably far more believe in God on other grounds altogether, and read the process theistically not because it contains independent evidence of divine activity, but because they cannot exclude any part of the universe from the control of the God in whom they believe. Though they cannot prove God from evolution they can and do interpret evolution in the light of God. Where this is the case the belief in evolution may affect to a greater or less degree the conception of God but it cannot destroy the conviction that he is.

One notable effect of it has been to promote the doctrine of divine immanence, of which I shall speak more particularly in the next chapter. With the old static idea of the universe a transcendent God, the maker of the world machine, himself entirely above and apart from it, was almost a necessity. But the new idea of the world as in process of evolution, through the play of forces resident within it, makes possible a different conception of God's relation to it. In Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* it was suggested that God may be the soul of the world, the living principle which embodies itself in the forms of external nature. The suggestion was not meant seriously, and is not to be taken as an evidence that Hume had felt the influence of the changing conception of the universe. It was simply an illustration drawn from ancient mythology with the purpose of weakening the common argument from effect to cause by indicating that the mechanical theory of the universe is not the only possible one. But the illustration suggests the possible effect upon one's idea of God of viewing the world as an organism rather than a machine. It is natural to look for God, if one looks for him at all, rather within than without; to see in him the vital principle instead of the maker and ruler. And this has actually been the almost universal consequence. With the increasing prevalence of the idea of the world as an organism, ever growing and developing through the constant play of inherent forces, has steadily grown the idea of immanence at the expense of the old notion of transcendence. To quote

from Lyman Abbott's *Theology of an Evolutionist* (1898): "I believe that the theology of the future . . . . will affirm that this Infinite and Eternal Energy is itself intelligent and beneficent—an infinitely wise and holy spirit dwelling within the universe and shaping it from within, much as the human spirit dwells within the human body and forms and controls it from within. Scientifically this is the affirmation that God is an Immanent God. 'Resident forces' and 'Divine Immanence' are different forms of the same statement." [1] And again from Aubrey Moore's essay on *The Christian Doctrine of God* in the volume entitled *Lux Mundi,* published in 1889:

"The one absolutely impossible conception of God in the present day is that which represents him as an occasional visitor. Science had pushed the Deists' God farther and farther away, and at the moment when it seemed as if he would be thrust out altogether, Darwinism appeared and under the guise of a foe did the work of a friend. It has conferred upon philosophy and religion an inestimable benefit by showing us that we must choose between two alternatives. Either God is everywhere present in nature, or he is nowhere. He cannot be here and not there. He cannot delegate his powers to demigods, called 'second causes.' In nature everything must be his work, or nothing. We must frankly return to the Christian view of direct divine agency, the immanence of divine power in nature from end to end, the belief in a God in whom not only we but all things have their being,

[1] P. 13.

or we must banish him altogether. It seems as if in the providence of God the mission of modern science was to bring home to our un-metaphysical ways of thinking the great truth of the divine immanence in creation, which is not less essential to the Christian idea of God than to a philosophical view of nature." [1]

It is true that the theory of evolution has been widely regarded as atheistical in its tendency and as involving the complete banishment of God from the world. And it is doubtless a fact that upon many it has had just this effect. But that is because such persons are in the grip of the old idea of God as a transcendent being, the only evidences for whose existence are unusual and so-called miraculous events. The idea of evolution, of course, undermines that idea of God. But evolution is atheistic in its tendency only in so far as it is supposed that God must act in such ways or not at all. As a matter of fact, while it has had the effect of breaking down the old conception of transcendence, it has widely resulted in the substitution of divine immanence, and hence has done as much to promote as to weaken faith in God.

Among other traditional ideas that have been affected by the conception of evolution is that of the original perfection and subsequent fall of man. It is true that evolution is compatible with a doctrine of original sin, and even lends support to such a doctrine, for the animal nature inherited from the brutes necessarily carries with it impulses and lusts which make man's intellectual and spiritual development difficult

[1] P. 82.

and must be overcome or subordinated if he is to realize his higher destiny. It is true also that evolution is entirely compatible with the notion of an original state of innocence, or moral unconsciousness, antedating the emergence of conscience and the sense of sin. But all this is very different from the theological doctrine, that man was created holy and in communion with God, and afterward fell from his high estate by an act of disobedience, thereby bringing the whole human race into the bondage of sin and guilt. In fact, where evolution is accepted, the tendency is to put human perfection into the future instead of the past; to look forward rather than backward for the golden age; to believe that man has risen from lower, not fallen from higher things; and that redemption for the race consists not in restoration to a primitive garden of Eden from which it was once banished, but in the ultimate realization of a kingdom of God possible only after long ages of intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth.

In general it may be said that evolution has promoted the substitution of natural for legal categories throughout theology. Death is no longer thought of as a punishment for sin, but as the necessary condition of progress. Life is pictured as an education rather than a probation, and future blessedness as an attainment rather than a reward. The whole notion of man's relation to God and of God's treatment of man is thus transformed, and large modifications in the old conceptions of salvation, redemption, and atonement necessarily result.

I have spoken of certain traditional doctrines which have been modified by the idea of evolution, but of still greater importance is its influence in changing the general attitude of religious men and the general atmosphere which they breathe. For one thing it has tended to break down the sharp contrasts of the old theology. Sin and righteousness, flesh and spirit, the redeemed and the natural man are no longer set over against each other in the old absolute and exclusive way. Sin may be due simply to imperfect development, racial as well as individual. Man is a product of evolution both in flesh and spirit, and the one as well as the other bears always the traces of its ancestry. The redeemed man is still the natural man, with certain common human impulses heightened, or with common human affections turned in a particular direction. Sharp divisions, such as the old scholasticism, with its static philosophy, particularly delighted in, are no longer tolerated. All is in process of growth and change. Everything shades into everything else, and the fixed classifications of other days have had to be everywhere abandoned. Religion is no longer segregated from the rest of life and given a unique supernatural origin. Religious inspiration is no longer put wholly in a class by itself, but is seen to be of like nature with the inspiration of the artist and the poet. In fact, the habit of looking at all things as the fruit of a gradual growth instead of an immediate creation has invaded the religious realm, and religion itself, the Bible, religious institutions, the individual religious experience and the religious experience of

communities and races are all viewed as natural products, subject to the general laws of growth, and to be understood like all else in the light of their origin and history.

One of the most important consequences of this recognition of universal growth and change has been the substitution of relativity for absoluteness in all departments of thought. The world is constantly developing and the end is not yet. Finality has not been reached in any line. There is no final and infallible authority in religion and ethics any more than in science and politics. There is no experience which may not be transcended; no principles of reason which may not be outgrown; no code which may not prove too straitened for the enlarging life of future ages. The satisfied assurance of dogmatist and rationalist is no longer ours. We realize that neither authority nor reason has said the last word. We are far more modest in some ways than our ancestors, for, highly as we value and loudly as we boast of the discoveries and attainments of the age in which we live, we yet expect still larger things to come in future days. We expect our children to look back, perhaps with tolerant amusement, at much that we have held most dear, or have most plumed ourselves upon. We not only expect it but we rejoice in it, for we no longer think that we are in possession of absolute truth and final wisdom. We count confidently upon their knowing and doing more and better than we have known and done. For this belief in evolution is no mere conviction that change, not fixity, is the

rule of existence. It does not substitute a new chaos for the old cosmos. It assumes not a meaningless flux of advancing and receding forces, but progress, in some degree at least, definite and constant.

The attitude of the evolutionist therefore, at any rate if he be a theist, is one of hope and confidence, not despair. Though the old fixed standards are gone, and many of the old landmarks have disappeared, the world is advancing. Struggle means attainment, and out of the travails of the present as of the past will be born a nobler future. There can be no doubt that modern effort for social improvement and for the uplifting of the lower classes, which is so marked a feature of the life of to-day, has been greatly promoted by this very belief in evolution, which has substituted for the old notion that all must remain as it is until the final catastrophe, confidence in the possibility of the indefinite betterment of the conditions of life as well as of life itself.

It is not necessary to multiply further the evidences of the effect of evolution upon modern religious thought. I shall have to return to the subject more than once in the chapters which follow. No conception has done more to modify our way of looking at things religious, and no department either of theology or of the practical religious life has been exempt from its influence.

CHAPTER X

DIVINE IMMANENCE

CHRISTIANITY inherited from Judaism belief in a personal God, the creator and ruler of the world. Under the influence of philosophy, particularly of the later Platonism, this was often combined by theologians with the idea of God as infinite substance, and now and then the result was a pantheistic identification of God with the universe. But as a rule the two were sharply distinguished. Indeed the distinction between God on the one hand and the world of nature and man on the other, has always been a marked characteristic of common Christian thought. Frequently the distinction was carried to the length of a metaphysical dualism, the nature of God being represented as wholly unlike the nature of men and things. Sometimes it was without metaphysical implications and meant only that God is a person separate from and independent of the creation.

When nominalism became prevalent in the late Middle Ages, the natural tendency was to interpret God in strictly personal terms and to conceive of him as an individual being as truly as men and things are individual beings. This was the common idea of God

in the period when the modern development of physical science began. He was thought of as the creator and ruler of the world, a God wholly outside the universe, to whom it owed its existence, and by whom it was controlled. This being the case, the almost inevitable effect of science was to undermine faith in God. As ever new forces were discovered in nature, and phenomenon after phenomenon formerly traced to divine activity was given a natural explanation, there seemed less and less place left for God and less and less reason to believe in him. Unless a revolution occurred in the prevalent idea of God and new ways of looking at him and new grounds for believing in him were found, the growing scepticism of the age must in course of time become universal. That it did not was due in no small part to the conception of divine immanence which has done much to make continued faith in God possible to intelligent men of modern times.

The conception is not new. It existed both in the Oriental and in the Greek world before Christianity appeared upon the scene, and in almost every age of Christian history it has had its more or less consistent exponents. In the period of the renaissance, particularly, it came to frequent and striking expression, as for instance in the system of Giordano Bruno, who drew from the recently published thesis of Copernicus, that the earth is not the center of the universe, the conclusion that the universe has no center, that it is infinite as God is infinite, and that it is not outside of or apart from him, but that God is himself

its soul, its indwelling life principle, which unites all its changing phenomena into one harmonious interrelated and interdependent whole. Even in the eighteenth century, when the prevailing tendency was most opposed to the doctrine of divine immanence, we find traces of it here and there, but only in the nineteenth did it become widely dominant in Christian thought, so widely dominant that it has often been called the characteristic religious doctrine of that century.[1]

Its prevalence was due in part to reaction against the extreme notions of divine transcendence which were so widely current in the eighteenth century, but this was only one phase of a general reaction against the dominant tendencies of the age which made itself felt in many quarters and resulted in the nineteenth century in a complete change of atmosphere. The reaction is seen in men as unlike in interest and ideals as Wesley in England, Rousseau in France, and Lessing in Germany. In spite of their differences they were at one in their impatience with much that the eighteenth century held most dear. For the rationalism of the age Wesley substituted faith and feeling; in opposition to its barren intellectualism and its boasted enlightenment Rousseau preached sentimentalism, love of nature instead of civilization, and contempt for all the amenities of society and attainments of human progress; while Lessing's breadth of

[1] For a fuller account of the history of the doctrine the reader may be referred to the author's article on Immanence in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, parts of which are reproduced in the present chapter.

vision and sympathy with other peoples and ages enabled him to transcend the limitations of the century at a number of points, to correct many of its established judgments, and, rationalist though he was, to perceive the inadequacy of rationalism and the need of deepening and enriching the existing appreciation of reality, both past and present, both human and divine.

Lessing is of particular interest to us in this connection because of his avowed liking for the great Jewish philosopher Spinoza. To the dominant spirit of the age, with its individualism and love of liberty, the monism and determinism of Spinoza were wholly uncongenial, and for more than a century after his death his philosophy was a despised and hated thing. Lessing was very apt to feel attracted by anyone whom contemporary opinion denounced, and in a number of cases he rescued from oblivion or obloquy historic figures whom the world had agreed to forget or condemn.. It was perhaps the same impulse which first led him to turn his attention to Spinoza. At any rate, he found in his monism and determinism a welcome escape from the rationalistic philosophy of the day which he had himself long shared and of whose superficiality he had become convinced. In a conversation with Jacobi shortly before his death he declared that if he were to call himself after the name of any master he would prefer Spinoza. When Jacobi published an account of the conversation it caused no little excitement and called forth a vigorous protest from Lessing's old friend and co-worker, Mendelssohn, who

was unable to believe that he had been correctly reported. But there can be no doubt that Jacobi understood him aright, and the incident was typical of what might easily happen, wherever the spirit of reaction against the prevailing temper of the age made itself felt.

Of still greater significance was the attitude of Herder, who, in 1787, published a little book entitled *Gott,* in which he glorified Spinoza and presented his system in such a form as to appeal strongly to many of his contemporaries. Reading him in the light of the philosophy of Leibnitz, who substituted force for substance and thus broke down the old dualism of thought and extension, he was able to preserve the monism of Spinoza's system without sacrificing spiritual idealism or the reality of human individuality.[1] The doctrine of divine immanence contained in this little book is one of the most intelligent as well as purest and loftiest to be found in modern literature. The chief significance of Herder's book lay in the fact that he expressed his sympathy with Spinoza, as Lessing had done, and commended him to the favorable consideration of his contemporaries. His commendation had all the more weight because his interpretation was such as to bring the system of the great Jewish sage into close accord with the rapidly growing romanticism of the age.

It was in part under the influence of Herder that the poet Goethe was attracted to Spinoza and soon became an enthusiastic disciple.

[1] See my article in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1905.

Spinoza's influence was felt also by the great German theologian Schleiermacher who, in his *Discourses on Religion,* paid him the following striking tribute which in that day was of great significance: "Reverently offer with me a lock of hair to the manes of the holy and despised Spinoza! The lofty world-spirit permeated him; the unending was his beginning and end; the universe his only and everlasting love. In holy innocence and deep humility he saw himself reflected in the world of eternity and saw also how he was its most lovely mirror. Full of religion he was and full of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he stands there alone and unapproached, master in his art, but raised above the profane rabble, without disciples and without citizenship." [1]

Schleiermacher's conception of divine immanence appears clearly enough from the passages already quoted in Chapter V., to which the following may be added: "The usual conception of God as a single being outside of the world and behind the world is not the beginning and end of religion, but only a way of expressing it which is seldom entirely pure and never adequate." [2] "How could any one say that I have depicted a religion without God? For I have set forth nothing but the immediate and original existence of God in and through feeling. Or is not God the one and highest unity? Is it not God alone before whom and in whom all individuality vanishes? And

[1] P. 112.

[2] Ibid., p. 194.

if you view the world as a whole and a universe could you do it otherwise than in God?" [1]

Spinoza's influence is seen both in Schleiermacher's interpretation of nature and man as mere differentiations or manifestations of the one infinite being, and in his insistence that separateness and independence are an evil and that the only true blessedness consists in losing one's individuality in God, the all. This led him to think contemptuously of the common doctrine of immortality which provides for the lasting preservation of a man's separate personality and is thus a curse rather than a blessing.

Spinoza's influence was also felt both by Fichte and Schelling, as seen in an earlier chapter. The climax came with Hegel, to whom the life of the universe, both of nature and of man, was but the unfolding of the self-consciousness of the Absolute. Nothing has independent existence of its own. In all things there is life and reality only because they are but expressions of the common reality, the Absolute, which alone is truly real. Thus, in part at least as a result of Spinoza's teaching, a doctrine of divine immanence, amounting often to genuine pantheism, became dominant in German thought and ultimately under its influence found a place in English and American as well.

Of somewhat similar effect has been the influence of the romantic movement in literature and art which arose in the late eighteenth century and for long controlled the culture of the western world. Roman-

[1] Ibid., p. 184.

ticism was a complicated phenomenon. In addition to the emotionalism, sentimentalism, and subjectivity which everywhere characterized it, there was widespread emphasis on the individual's relation to the world in which he lives and upon his openness to its influences. An important part of culture, according to the Romanticists, consists in learning to appreciate the beauty and harmony of the universe, in coming into more intimate sympathy with it, and in acquiring a sensitiveness to all its impressions. It was a common tendency among them to try to reproduce the conditions of earlier ages, before the modern spirit of enlightenment had taken possession of the world, when everyone believed in immediate intercourse between man and the universe about him, and when the fancy had free play and was not yet destroyed by the ruthless hand of reason. The effect upon religion was very diverse. Some of the Romanticists felt the religious impulse very strongly, but were led by their hostility to the dominance of reason, which they believed began with the Reformation, and by their distaste for the prevalent coldness and barrenness of contemporary Protestantism, to turn to Catholicism and to seek in it what they could not find in the newer faith. The result was a great revival of Catholicism in Germany and France, and later in England, where the Oxford movement gave delayed and somewhat distorted expression to certain elements of the romantic spirit. Many of the Romanticists, on the other hand, particularly in Germany, far from finding themselves attracted by Catholicism, revolted against

religion altogether, which they knew only in its rationalistic form, and looked down upon it in contempt.

It was for Romanticists of this class that Schleiermacher wrote his *Discourses upon Religion.* The most important of the Discourses was the second on The Nature of Religion. As already seen, its general thesis was that religion has its seat not in the intellect nor in the will, but in the feelings, and consists in the sense of the universal or infinite. Schleiermacher's religious sense was simply a translation into other terms of the artistic sense of the Romanticists. What they called openness to the universe he called openness to God. What they regarded as a sense of the beauty and harmony of the universe he made a sense of the divine. And hence he claimed that the highest culture, of which the Romanticists made so much, includes religion, and that to be without the latter is to neglect an important part of one's nature and to be content with a partial and one-sided development. Religion raises a man above his individual limits into converse with the infinite, and the religious man recognizes in every thing a manifestation of the divine. The ego, or spirit, and non-ego, or matter, are appearances of the infinite. In the infinite the two exist in perfect unity; in the world they are separated; but they become one again in every impression of the world upon us. The universal manifests itself only through the individual, and on the other hand the individual comes to his true life only in the universal. This is a combination of romanticism and

Spinozism of the greatest significance and represents an attitude which has ever since been very common among religious thinkers.

The general literature of the nineteenth century also revealed the wide prevalence of the tendency to conceive of God as immanent in the world of nature and man. Often the literary conception of immanence, which was commonly vague and indefinite enough, amounted to a pantheistic identification of God and the universe, more often it meant only the recognition of God as the soul of the world, or its indwelling life principle. There has always been much of the latter in poetry, but in the nineteenth century it became characteristic of it to a degree rarely seen before. Romanticism, Spinozism, and the general reaction against the alleged superficiality and artificiality of the eighteenth century all had their part in producing the result. A few familiar passages may be quoted by way of illustration.

> "Glory to thee—Father of earth and heaven!
> All conscious presence of the universe!
> Nature's vast everlasting Energy!"[1]
>
> "To every form of being is assigned,"
> Thus calmly spoke the venerable Sage,
> "An *active* Principle: howe'er removed
> From sense and observation, it subsists
> In all things, in all natures; in the stars
> Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
> In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
> That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
> The moving waters, and the invisible air.
> Whate'er exists hath properties that spread

[1] Coleridge, *Destiny of Nations.*

Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know; and yet is reverenced least,
And least respected in the human mind,
Its most apparent home."[1]

"Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?"[2]

To which may be added the following characteristic passages from Carlyle and Emerson: "Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish."[3] "We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Mean-

[1] Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book IX.
[2] Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism*.
[3] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, chapter VIII.

time within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul." [1]

A similar attitude toward nature, expressed not in poetry but in sober prose, appears in the philosophical system of the German psychologist Fechner, the father of the science known as psychophysics. According to Fechner all nature is animated by spirit. There is no dead matter; everywhere is life and consciousness. This life manifests itself in countless individual souls, in things as well as in men, but they are all only expressions of the one infinite life which lies back of and beneath them and unites them all in one indivisible whole. "The infinite does not lie beyond the finite, but the finite is the content of the infinite." [2] "God is the all or the spirit of all. To the bodily order of the world there corresponds a spiritual order which is mirrored and borne by the bodily." [3] "God as a spirit is related to the world of bodies. What the relation of spirit to body is we learn in ourselves. But God as the most universal, the greatest,

[1] Emerson's Essay on *The Over-Soul.*
[2] Fechner, *Ueber die Seelenfrage* (1861), p. 227.
[3] Ibid., p. 223.

the highest spirit, is related to that which is most universal, greatest and highest in the bodily world. We can also learn from ourselves how the relation of spirit to body is enlarged and heightened as the sphere of the spirit widens and its grade advances. The higher spirit is borne by a more highly developed organism and as it grows raises it, so to speak, still higher. Proceeding further in this direction we shall find that the largest and highest spirit is borne by the largest and most highly developed organism, that is, the world itself, not the inorganic, but the whole world, including its beginnings together with all the history and fortunes of men." [1]

The influence of Fechner's fanciful speculations may not have been great; he has had few if any followers in this matter. But his system in spite of its phantasy and frequent grotesqueness represents a common tendency to read nature, as Schelling did, as but the expression of indwelling or immanent spirit and hence represents, though in an extreme and often pagan way, the common doctrine of divine immanence.

Similar effects have come from the rise and growing prevalence of the conception of evolution to whose influence in promoting the doctrine of divine immanence I referred in the previous chapter. An additional quotation may be given in order to illustrate still further the relation of the two ideas. "If by the accumulation of irresistible evidence we are driven—may not one say permitted—to accept Evolution as God's method in creation, it is a mistaken policy to

[1] Ibid., p. 118.

glory in what it cannot account for. The reason why men grudge to Evolution each of its fresh claims to show how things have been made is the groundless fear that if we discover how they are made we minimize their divinity. When things are known, that is to say, we conceive them as natural, on Man's level; when they are unknown, we call them divine—as if our ignorance of a thing were the stamp of its divinity. If God is only to be left to the gaps in our knowledge, where shall we be when these gaps are filled up? And if they are never to be filled up, is God only to be found in the disorders of the world? Those who yield to the temptation to reserve a point here and there for special divine interposition are apt to forget that this virtually excludes God from the rest of the process. If God appears periodically, he disappears periodically. If he comes upon the scene at special crises he is absent from the scene in the intervals. Whether is all-God or occasional-God the nobler theory? Positively, the idea of an immanent God, which is the God of Evolution, is infinitely grander than the occasional wonder-worker who is the God of an old theology. Negatively, the older view is not only the less worthy, but it is discredited by science." [1]

[1] Drummond's *Ascent of Man* (1894), p. 333 ff. Compare also the following from *The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation:* "To many, at first sight, it [i. e. evolution] is apt to appear as a dreary view of the divine economy of our world, as if it placed God at an immeasurable distance from his creatures, and left them without refuge or remedy from the numberless ills that 'flesh is heir to,' and which no one can hope altogether

Both evolution and immanence, indeed, represent the same general tendency to emphasize unity, which is a marked characteristic of modern times. In the one case it is unity of process, binding all existence together; in the other it is unity of force or of substance, making all things the expression of one all-pervading divine energy or of one all-embracing divine being.

The effects of the various influences that have been described are similar and yet in many respects diverse. All have tended to promote the belief in divine immanence, but the belief takes many forms, according as one or another interest is dominant. God is conceived, as has been seen, as the soul of the world, the spirit animating all nature; the universal force which takes the myriad forms of heat, light, gravitation, electricity and the like; the all-embracing sub-

to escape. But, in reality, God may be presumed to be revealed to us in every one of the phenomena of the system, in the suspension of globes in space, in the degradation of rocks and the upthrowing of mountains, in the development of plants and animals, in each movement of our minds, and in all that we enjoy and suffer, seeing that, the system requiring a sustainer as well as an originator, he must be continually present in every part of it, albeit he does not permit a single law to swerve in any case from its appointed course of operation. Thus, we may still feel that He is the immediate breather of our life and ruler of our spirits, that we may, by rightly directed thought, come into communion with him, and feel that, even when his penal ordinances are enforced upon us, his hand and arm are closely about us." (Fifth edition, 1846, p. 406.) The difference between this tentative and guarded utterance and the emphatic and confident words quoted from Drummond, and in the previous chapter from Aubrey Moore, illustrates the distance which religious thought has traveled since the conception of evolution began to make its influence felt.

stance of which men and things are but differentiations; the principle of unity underlying all multiplicity; the infinite consciousness in which all things have their existence; the indwelling personality with whom we commune when we contemplate nature or look into our own souls. The conception may be crass or refined, spiritual or material, idealistic or realistic, but in every case it is a form of cosmical theism, faith in a god of whom the world of nature and of man is in some real and immediate sense a manifestation or expression. It is this that constitutes the difference between the modern idea of immanence and the traditional idea of omnipresence. The latter starts with the distinction between God and the world; the former with their identity. Omnipresence asserts only that the infinite God is present or is active in all parts of the universe; immanence implies a much more intimate relationship, that the universe and God are in some sort truly one. The dominant interest in the former case is to magnify God, in the latter case the world; in the former to assert divine control of the world, in the latter the world's divinity. The tendency of the doctrine of immanence is pantheistic, of the doctrine of omnipresence quite the reverse. To identify the two conceptions, as some theologians, in their desire to avoid the pitfalls of pantheism, are inclined to do,[1] is to mistake the real significance of the modern tendency which the word immanence seeks to express

[1] Compare, for instance, Clarke's *Christian Doctrine of God* (1909), p. 320 ff.

and so to obscure the difference between the new situation and the old.

The influence of the doctrine of divine immanence has made itself felt over the whole range of Christian thought. A few examples only must suffice. It has meant the bridging of the old chasm between nature and the supernatural, with the result that the difficulties, which beset so many thinkers of the eighteenth century, have completely vanished. All nature is instinct with the divine, and nature and the supernatural are not two realms, but one. Everything that occurs is a miracle, for God is in it; and yet there are no miracles in the sense of isolated instances of divine power. The following quotation from Schleiermacher will illustrate the common attitude in this matter: "Miracle is only the religious name for event. Every event, even the most natural and common, is a miracle if it lend itself to a controllingly religious interpretation. To me all is miracle. In your sense of the word only something inexplicable and strange is a miracle which to me is none. The more religious you were the more miracles you would find everywhere. All conflict over particular events, as to whether they are worthy to be called miracles or not, impresses me painfully with the feeling that the religious sense of the disputants is very poor and needy." [1]

Of course where such a view of the relation of nature and the supernatural obtains, the old controversy over the miraculous ceases to have any meaning. We need no miracles to prove the presence and activity of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

God, and a particular event is no less a miracle because we recognize that it has been caused by the play of natural forces. All is natural and supernatural at once. We find God in the commonest facts of every-day life and not alone in signs and wonders. The old difficulties are thus banished not by reading God out of any part of the world, but by reading him into all parts of it. Science is given its full rights, and its explanation of the natural connection of phenomena is accepted without demur. But a new interpretation is put upon them all, not to the impoverishment of science, but to the enrichment of life. The belief gives a new meaning to nature which to the believer in divine immanence is not simply the work of God but his dwelling place. It acquires a sacredness not hitherto belonging to it. To be natural is not to be lower than the supernatural, of less worth and significance than it. To be natural is to be real; and to be real is to be divine and hence supernatural at once. All this falls in admirably with the tendency, so general since the renaissance, and particularly the Enlightenment, to magnify the significance of the present world quite apart from its relation to a future life, and to recognize its inherent interest and worth.

In this same connection may be noticed the influence of the doctrine of immanence upon the traditional idea of revelation. As God is immanent in the life of man divine revelation comes from within, not from without. The religious man looks into his own experience for the disclosure of divine truth, and if he also turns to the pages of a sacred book, it is simply

because it is a record of the religious experiences of other men who have found God in their own souls and have learned from him there. Similarly it is common to assert that no special divine revelation and no special agents of revelation are needed, because all nature and all life are instinct with God, and the divine is everywhere about us, if we but knew it. In the words of Mrs. Browning,

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

Similarly the doctrine of divine immanence has served to bridge the old chasm between earth and heaven. This world is no longer thought of as an evil place from which we must escape if we would be with God and enjoy his presence. It is God's world and God's dwelling place, and the believer may find him here as truly as anywhere. Heaven begins on earth for those who have eyes to see the ever present divine. It is not a place which we enter after death but a frame of mind which we may share here and now. Again Schleiermacher's attitude is typical. "Not immortality outside of time and behind it, or rather in time but only after the present; but the immortality which we can have immediately and already in this temporal life, and which is a problem in whose solution we are always engaged. In the midst of the temporal to be one with the everlasting, and to be

eternal every moment, this is the immortality of religion." [1]

The doctrine of divine immanence has also destroyed altogether for those who share it the old notion of man. By traditional Christianity man was thought of as totally depraved and corrupt, the opposite in every sense of the divine. To be human was to be undivine, to be divine was to be unhuman. Where divine immanence is believed in man is recognized as himself divine. His nature is one with God's, not other than it. He is but a limited being, but he is an expression of the divine nature and needs simply to awake to that fact. This means, of course, a revolution in the old conception of salvation. What man requires is not regeneration in the old sense, or a change of nature, but simply an awakening to what he really is. He needs no magical or sacramental grace but simply the determination, born of his recognition of his divine sonship, to live as a son of God should.

Perhaps most striking of all is the effect the doctrine of divine immanence has had upon traditional conceptions of the person of Christ. The old Christological controversies of the fourth and following centuries proceeded upon the assumption, which was shared by everybody, that God and man are of wholly diverse natures. If Christ was a real man, it seemed difficult to suppose him divine. If divine, it seemed

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 195. Cf. also Frederick Dennison Maurice's interpretation of eternal life and eternal death in his *Theological Essays* (1853), p. 427 ff.

necessary to deny his humanity. Hence arose adoptionism on the one hand and docetism on the other. The doctrine of the two natures, which was finally adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, meant that the one person, Jesus Christ, possessed two wholly distinct and alien natures, the divine and the human, neither of which was destroyed or transformed by the union. Such a doctrine was always in a state of unstable equilibrium, and it is no wonder it seemed difficult to many a thinker. There was constant danger that it would be resolved into its constituent elements, and that Christ would be pronounced only man or only God. With the prevalence of the doctrine of divine immanence the situation was completely changed. Divine and human ceased to be alien conceptions—the two terms of a disjunctive proposition —and were recognized as truly one. Christ, therefore, if human, must be divine as all men are. Instead of the assertion of one meaning the denial of the other, the assertion of either meant the assertion of both. This, of course, took all meaning out of the unitarian controversy, so far as that had to do with the deity of Christ. Where a thoroughgoing doctrine of divine immanence is accepted, the contradiction between divine and human, which alone justifies the denial of Christ's deity in the interest of his true humanity, is done away, and the two parties are at one in asserting that he is at once human and divine.

Schleiermacher's doctrine of the person and work of Christ is a capital illustration of what I have been

saying.[1] According to him, salvation consists in victory over sin through the consciousness of union with the divine. The man who has awakened to this oneness, and whose life is dominated by the sense of it, is a saved man. Sin becomes unnatural to him, for it is the expression of a nature single, separate, and apart. But according to Schleiermacher, the consciousness of oneness with the divine is mediated by Jesus Christ. His significance lies in the fact that his life was completely dominated by it, and that he was perfectly holy because perfectly one with God. He arouses this consciousness in us as we come into contact with him and feel the influence of his life and personality. We enter into vital fellowship with him; we share his consciousness of God; our lives are transformed, and we are saved. There is no need of expiation or sacrifice. Our only need is to have Christ's consciousness of the divine, and this we gain through fellowship with him.

The deity of Christ resides in the completeness of his consciousness of God. In a true sense all men are divine, for they are but manifestations of the one common reality which appears in nature as well as in humanity. Essentially Christ is no more divine than we are or than nature is. But he knows his oneness with God; he is fully awake to his own divinity; and his life is completely controlled by his realization of it. He is, therefore, divine in a sense which nature cannot be and in a sense which we are not yet but hope eventually to become. We are all

[1] See Schleiermacher's *Der Christliche Glaube*, second edition, § 91 ff.

children of God, and awakened and inspired by him we are striving to live as such. Thus the work of Christ is that of revelation. The revelation, however, is not interpreted, as commonly in the past, in an external way, but as the fruit of personal communion and vital inner fellowship. And it is not thought of as the communication of objective truth but as the disclosure of a reality of consciousness. Because of Jesus' sense of God, and only because of it, he is our Lord and Master, the one whom we adore and follow, the one who saves us from separateness and sin and restores us to wholeness and holiness. Our belief in his deity is no longer a mere matter of tradition; it is the necessary consequence of his work in communicating to us his oneness with God, a work to which our own religious experience bears immediate testimony.

It is evident, in view of all that has been said, that the doctrine of divine immanence is of far-reaching significance and, where it is really made earnest with, inevitably transforms the greater part of the traditional system of theology. As a matter of fact, few religious ideas have proved more revolutionary. But the conception of immanence is beset from the point of view of Christian theism with serious difficulties, and the efforts of modern theologians have been largely directed to their removal. The tendency of the doctrine is undoubtedly pantheistic. In the hands of many of its advocates, indeed, it has been nothing more nor less than thoroughgoing pantheism. But pantheism imperils, if it does not destroy, the per-

sonality of God, the individuality of man, and the reality of sin, and hence seems to make religion and ethics in the Christian sense alike an illusion. As a consequence many modern theists, while accepting the doctrine of divine immanence, have striven to distinguish it from pantheism and to safeguard the interests imperiled thereby.

Thus it is claimed that while God is immanent in the universe, he also transcends it. All things are pervaded by him but he is more than all of them. A strict pantheism identifies God with the totality of men and things. The theists referred to recognize God as including this totality, but as more and greater than it. This form of theism has been called in distinction from pantheism, panentheism (for instance by the German philosopher K. C. F. Krause), its formula being not "all things are God," but "all things are in God." The transcendence of God may in this case be understood either ontologically or dynamically, according as one reads the divine nature and the universe as a whole in terms of being or of energy. If the latter, transcendence may be interpreted as the inexhaustibility of the divine attributes, which are manifested in all the activities of the universe, but are not impoverished thereby.[1]

On the other hand there are those who distinguish

[1] Cf., for instance, the article by Dr. James M. Whiton on *Some Implicates of Theism* in the *American Journal of Theology* for April, 1901, where it is said that "the energy immanent in all things is also a transcendent energy, consciously originating and sustaining all, but exceeding all that proceeds from it" (p. 316).

immanence from pantheism by making God less than the all. According to Dr. Rashdall, for instance, the Absolute is not identical with God, but includes God and other spirits. "The Absolute, therefore, if we must have a phrase which might well be dispensed with, consists of God and the souls, including, of course, all that God and those souls know or experience." [1]

Again God is distinguished from the universe by being thought of as the permanent and underlying reality of which it is but the temporary and passing manifestation. This conception, which is at bottom identical with that of Hegel, has been very common since his day. The following passages from Theodore Parker may be quoted by way of illustration: "God, then, is universally present in the world of matter. He is the substantiality of matter. The circle of his being in space has an infinite radius. We cannot say, Lo here, or Lo there—for he is everywhere. He fills all Nature with his overflowing currents; without him it were not. His Presence gives it existence; his Will its law and force; his Wisdom its order; his Goodness its beauty." "There is no spot the foot of hoary Time has trod on but it is instinct with God's activity. He is the ground of Nature; what is permanent in the passing; what is real in the apparent." [2]

[1] In his essay on *Personality, Human and Divine,* in the volume entitled *Personal Idealism,* edited by Henry Sturt (1902), p. 392.

[2] *A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion,* Book II, chapter II.

The objections to pantheism are also avoided by insistence upon the personality of God. In this connection the following words of Coleridge are worth quoting: "God (says Dr. Priestly) not only does, but is everything. *Jupiter est quodcunque vides.* And thus a system, which commenced by excluding all life and immanent activity from the visible universe, and evacuating the natural world of all nature, ended by substituting the Deity, and reducing the Creator to a mere *anima mundi:* a scheme that has no advantage over Spinozism but its inconsistency, which does indeed make it suit a certain order of intellects, who, like the *pleuronectæ* (or flat-fish) in ichthyology which have both eyes on the same side, never see but half of a subject at one time, and forgetting the one before they get to the other, are sure not to detect any inconsistency between them. And what has been the consequence? An increasing unwillingness to contemplate the Supreme Being in his personal attributes: and thence a distaste to all the peculiar doctrines of the Christian Faith, the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and Redemption. . . . Alas! even the sincerest seekers after light are not safe from the contagion. Some have I known, constitutionally religious —I speak feelingly; for I speak of that which for a brief period was my own state[1]—who under this un-

[1] Compare the striking remark in a letter written by Coleridge in 1803, more than twenty years before the publication of the *Aids to Reflection:* "You were the first man from whom I heard that article of my faith enunciated which is the nearest to my heart,—the pure fountain of all my moral and religious feelings and comforts,—I mean the absolute Impersonality of the Deity." (*Letters,* edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 1895, vol. I, p. 444.)

healthful influence have been so estranged from the heavenly Father, the living God, as even to shrink from the personal pronouns as applied to the Deity. But many do I know, and yearly meet with, in whom a false and sickly taste coöperates with the prevailing fashion: many, who find the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob far too *real,* too substantial; who feel it more in harmony with their indefinite sensations

> To worship Nature in the hill and valley,
> Not knowing what they love:—

and (to use the language, but not the sense or purpose, of the great poet of our age) would fain substitute for the Jehovah of their Bible

> A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things!"[1]

Herder denied the divine personality on the ground that the term is anthropomorphic; but he ascribed intelligence and will to God and so distinguished his theism from pantheism which, so he claimed, makes God mere unconscious substance or blind force.

It is in the personality of God that many find the secret of his transcendence. As our personalities are at once in nature and yet apart from it and above it,

[1] *Aids to Reflection,* p. 361 ff.

so God, a personal spirit, is to be conceived as "at once transcending and immanent in nature." [1] In this connection reference may be made to the familiar contention of Horace Bushnell that human personality, like divine, is supernatural.[2]

Difficulties in the notion of personality as applied to an immanent God have been felt by many since Herder's day. Personality seems to involve limitation, a self and a not-self, and hence to be inapplicable to the being who includes and embraces all that is. Rashdall, for instance, asserts that "the consciousness which is personal distinguishes itself from other consciousnesses and particularly from other persons. Individuality is an essential element in our idea of personality." [3] And hence "Personality is undoubtedly inconsistent with the idea of the Absolute or Infinite Being." [4]

This difficulty is commonly met by the assertion that self-consciousness, which is the essence of personality, is primarily positive and inclusive, not negative and exclusive, and that consequently it belongs in complete measure only to the absolute or infinite being, God. This was the contention of Lotze, who says, in his *Microcosmus,* "In the nature of the finite mind as such is to be found the reason why the development of its personal consciousness can take place

[1] Illingworth: *Divine Immanence* (1898), p. 85.
[2] See his *Nature and the Supernatural,* chapter 2.
[3] *Op. cit.,* p. 372.
[4] *Op. cit.,* p. 392. This does not mean that Rashdall denies the personality of God, for, according to him, as already remarked, God is less than the Absolute, not identical with it.

only through the influences of that cosmic whole which the finite being itself is not, that is through stimulation coming from the Non-Ego, not because it needs the contrast with something *alien* in order to have self-existence, but because in this respect, as in every other, it does not contain in itself the conditions of its existence. We do not find this limitation in the being of the Infinite; hence for it alone is there possible a self-existence, which needs neither to be initiated nor to be continuously developed by something not itself, but which maintains itself within itself with spontaneous action that is eternal and had no beginning. Perfect personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this Personality but a limit and a hindrance of its development." [1] Similarly, in a recent essay on *God and the Absolute* it is declared, "So far is it from being impossible for the Absolute to be personal, that it is rather true that nothing else could be fully personal." [2] The author of the essay goes on to say that only the Absolute has the coherence and comprehensiveness necessary to the ideal of personality. Human personality is always growing toward a goal which is never reached. The sharp antithesis between the self and the not-self tends to diminish as we ascend in spirit-

[1] Book IX, chapter 4; quoted from the English translation by Hamilton and Jones (1885), vol. II, p. 687.

[2] W. H. Moberley in the volume entitled *Foundations: a Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought* (1913), p. 504.

ual experience, and hence it is not personality but a false conception of it which is against absolutism.[1]

Similarly the evils of pantheism are avoided by interpreting God in ethical terms. The God who is resident in the world is a God of moral ideals and is working out his holy will through all the processes of nature and of life. "The infinite and eternal Power that is manifested in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God. We may exhaust the resources of metaphysics in debating how far his nature may fitly be expressed in terms applicable to the psychical nature of man; such vain attempts will only serve to show how we are dealing with a theme that must ever transcend our finite powers of conception. But of some things we may feel sure. Humanity is not a mere local incident in an endless and aimless series of cosmical changes. The events of the universe are not the work of chance, neither are they the outcome of blind necessity. Practically, there is a purpose in the world whereof it is our highest duty to learn the lesson, however well or ill we may fare in rendering a scientific account of it. When from the dawn of life we see all things working together toward the evolution of the highest spiritual attributes of Man, we know, however the words may stumble in which we try to say it, that God is in the deepest sense

[1] In his Gifford Lectures for 1911, on *The Principle of Individuality and Value,* Bosanquet says: "If a man has more power of comprehension and inclusion so that less is outside him, his own unity and individuality is so far and for that reason not less but greater" (p. 286). Cf., also Illingworth: *Divine Transcendence,* p. 45 ff.

a moral Being."[1] In other words, God must be moral because the ethical is the highest thing in the universe, and God is the indwelling force in all the evolutionary process from the beginning to the end. Eventuating as it does in the ethical and spiritual the process involves the ethical and spiritual character of God, the immanent cause.

One of the clearest and baldest statements of the method of procedure which begins with a cosmical God, immanent in the universe, and goes on to an ethical God, a revival under new conditions of the old order of the traditional natural theologies, is the following from President Schurman: "The fact will have to be recognized sooner or later that there is no anthropic proof of the existence of God. The moral ideal of man may throw some light upon the moral character of God, but it is powerless to prove the divine existence. . . . The true state of the case seems rather to be that though conscience does not prove the existence of one infinite spirit, it yet obliges us to invest it, if existent, with the predicate of righteousness. If there be a God, moral laws seem best explained as expressions of his nature."[2] The contrast between this and the genuine ethical theism of modern times, which begins with the ethical rather than the cosmical, will appear in the next chapter.

[1] Fiske: *The Idea of God as Affected by Modern Knowledge* (1885), p. 166 ff.
[2] *Belief in God* (1890), p. 240.

Again immanence has been guarded against some of the defects of pantheism by emphasis upon the reality of human individuality. Already in the second edition of his *Gott,* Herder grappled with the problem of individuation, and maintained that divine immanence does not destroy the personality of man but only makes it the more real and vivid. And Schleiermacher took a similar position in his *Monologues* which appeared the year after his *Discourses on Religion* and dealt with the subject of ethics. The discussions of Professor Royce in the volume entitled *The Conception of God* and in his Gifford Lectures on *The World and the Individual* are among the most notable of modern contributions to the subject. According to him, individuality consists in the partial nature of human consciousness which is distinguished from the Absolute's all-embracing consciousness by its limited and fragmentary character, as in the uniqueness of each human will which is an exclusive expression of a single aspect of the divine will. "The self-consciousness of each finite individual is a portion of the Divine Self-Consciousness. The One Will of the Absolute is a One that is essentially and organically composed of many. These many forms of will harmonize with the Whole, just by being, in a relative measure, free in respect one of another. The many forms of will form One, because it is best—is an aspect of the perfection of the Divine Selfhood—that they should do so. The One Will stands differentiated into many, because in such variety of ideals

there is greater significance than in a merely dead and abstract unity." [1]

A still more emphatic assertion of human individuality, providing a more secure place for freedom and initiative and so for moral responsibility on the part of man, is found in the writings of James Martineau, according to whom God is immanent in nature, but not in man. All natural phenomena are due to the immediate activity of God, who is their sole cause, but man is a free spirit, created such by God, and his actions are his own, not God's. He thus in a real sense, though of course by divine appointment, transcends God, and constitutes a sphere of independent causality, a center of free ethical life.

Thus Martineau says: "But the full security against the dissolving mists of pantheism is first obtained when we quit the simply natural field in which nothing is possible but in linear links of succession, and stand in presence of the supernatural in man, to whom an *alternative* is given, and in whom is a real mind, or miniature of God, consciously acting from a selected end in view. Here it is that we first learn the solemn difference in ourselves between what is and what might be; and, carrying the lesson abroad, discover how faint a symbol is visible nature of its ideal essence and Divine Cause. Here it is, that, after long detention in our prison of facts, the walls become transparent, and let us see the fields more than elysian beyond. The Eternal is more than all that he has

[1] *The Conception of God* (1897), p. 293 ff. Cf. also *The World and the Individual*, First Series (1900), Lecture X.

done. And if the universe, with all its vastness, is only the single actuality which shapes itself out of a sea of possibilities; if its laws are but one function of thought in a Mind that transcends them every way; then, in being the indwelling beauty and power of the world, he does not cease to be the living God above the world and though the world were gone. Still more, if, within the local realm of his administration, there is an enclosure which he has chosen to rail off as sacred for a minor divineness like his own, for a free and spiritual life, having play enough from the thraldom of natural laws for responsible movements of its own; then, however resistless the sweep of his power elsewhere, here, at the threshold of this shrine of conflict and of prayer, he gently pauses in his almightiness, and lets only his love and righteousness enter in. Here is a holy place reserved for genuine moral relations and personal affections, for infinite pity and finite sacrifice, for tears of compunction and the embrace of forgiveness, and all the hidden life by which the soul ascends to God." [1]

Thus the individuality of man and the reality of human righteousness and sin are preserved by a partial denial of immanence and its limitation to only a portion of existence, a significant admission of the ethical inadequacy of any thoroughgoing doctrine of immanence.

The many attempts to combine immanence with Christian theism abundantly reveal the serious difficulties involved in immanence. That the difficulties

[1] *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (1890), p. 35 ff.

are insuperable need not be asserted, but it is evident at any rate that two disparate interests, the cosmical and the ethical, are involved in the combination. Meanwhile, the ethical interest has had its own independent place quite apart from the cosmical interest in framing modern conceptions of God, and in the next chapter I desire to trace its development and its influence upon modern theism.

CHAPTER XI

ETHICAL THEISM

In the doctrine of divine immanence the controlling interest is cosmical—God's relation to the world. In ethical theism, properly so-called, the controlling interest is ethical—God's relation to the moral ideals and purposes of men. The doctrine of divine immanence of course does not exclude the ethical interest. As seen in the previous chapter, many of its protagonists insist that the immanent God must be interpreted in ethical terms. But in this case the result, which is sometimes called ethical immanence, is due neither to the cosmical nor to the ethical interest alone but to a combination of the two. The latter belong to disparate realms, and the theisms to which they respectively lead are not contradictory or antagonistic, it is true, but independent and incommensurable. The tendency of immanence, though it may not commonly go so far, is to identify God and the world. The tendency of ethical theism is to distinguish him from the world. Ethical theism therefore makes in the direction of divine transcendence, and if it be associated with immanence limits the latter and pre-

vents it from reaching the extreme of pantheism toward which it naturally moves.

Ethical theism leads also to particular emphasis upon the personality of God, and thus avoids one of the chief difficulties that beset any thoroughgoing doctrine of divine immanence. As the latter is in line with the modern philosophical emphasis on the unity of all things, and is the principal theological expression of that emphasis, ethical theism, in its controlling recognition of divine personality, is in line with a growing philosophical tendency to put personality into the forefront and to interpret all existence in its light. The two tendencies, as seen in the previous chapter, are not inconsistent, but they represent widely different interests.[1]

If the doctrine of divine immanence was the characteristic doctrine of the nineteenth century, ethical theism also had its exponents, and especially in recent years has begun to extend its influence. The moral argument for God, or the moral approach to God, is very old. Our moral nature, enabling us to distinguish between right and wrong and impelling us to choose the right and eschew the wrong, demands, so it has been believed, a creator who is himself a moral being, as we are, and who has implanted in us our moral principles and our sense of ought.

With this age-old argument for a moral creator

[1] In this connection it is interesting to compare two recent volumes of essays by two different groups of Oxford scholars: *Personal Idealism*, edited by Henry Sturt (1902), and *Foundations, a Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought*, edited by B. H. Streeter (1913).

Kant broke completely. The argument from effect to cause is as invalid, according to him, in the moral as in the cosmical realm. The more recent study of biological ethics, showing the natural development and the social function of the moral sense, has served only to supplement and strengthen Kant's negative conclusion and to-day there are probably few thinkers who employ the old argument in the old way.

The same is true of the notion, once so common in certain circles, that our moral principles are without support, unless the will of God be assumed to make right right, and wrong wrong. The legalism of this old position is entirely out of line with modern interpretations of the world and human life, and it is now generally abandoned.

A modification of this position, however, is still widely prevalent which sees in the existence of a righteous God the only rational ground for the objectivity of the laws of morality. Thus, according to Rashdall, "What we mean by an objective law is that the moral law is a part of the ultimate nature of things, on the level of the laws of physical nature, and it cannot be *that,* unless we assume that law to be an expression of the same mind in which physical laws originate. The idea of duty, when analyzed, implies the idea of God." [1] But evolution has served to undermine this position also, and probably an increasing number find it inadequate and unsatisfactory.

Closely connected with the idea that God alone can make right right and wrong wrong, is the still more

[1] *Philosophy and Religion* (1910), p. 74.

common belief that God is needed to supply moral sanctions strong enough to compel the consciences of men. This was the all but universal position in the eighteenth century, the classic period of rationalism. The true ground of morality, according to the philosopher Locke, "can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hands rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender." [1] And according to the theologian Paley, "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." [2] With this, too, Kant broke completely. Morality, he maintained, is self-vindicating, and needs no extraneous supports. The whole notion of reward and punishment is destructive of true morality. Virtue done for the sake of gaining happiness or avoiding misery is no virtue.

Having thus closed the traditional roads to God from the moral nature and needs of men, as he had already closed those from the world and its phenomena, Kant recovered God, as was seen in an earlier chapter, by another road peculiarly his own. In his theology, as well as in his epistemology, he felt the influence of Hume, but in the one as in the other he went beyond Hume's negations to a positive and original reconstruction. We do not reach God by arguing back from the universe to a first cause, from the multiplicity of phenomena to a principle of unity, from contingent to necessary being. The iron chain

[1] *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book I, chap. III, sect. 6.
[2] *Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book I, chap. 7.

of cause and effect, which binds our phenomenal universe together, knows no God and has no place for God. God is not a phenomenon, a being presented to us. God is an idea, a belief, which gives meaning to our ethical life, and hence is a postulate of our moral will. The moral necessity which leads us to postulate God is not that we must account for the origin of our moral natures, and so need a moral creator, or that we must have a moral law-giver, or standard, or motive. The law of our practical reason, the categorical imperative, requires us to labor for the accomplishment of the highest good, and God is the being whom we assume in order to make the highest good realizable and hence rational. It is not necessary to describe further this form of ethical theism, or to indicate the modifications it has undergone at the hands of Fichte, Ritschl, and modern pragmatists. Enough has already been said in chapter seven, where its significance for the rehabilitation of faith was under consideration. In the present chapter I wish simply to call attention to some of its implications and to some of the effects it has had upon other religious ideas.

There is, of course, no quarrel between such an ethical theism and the most rigorous natural science. God may be entirely undiscoverable in the phenomenal world of cause and effect, of space and time. The development of disbelief in the supernatural, which was traced in chapter three, may bear its perfect fruit, and yet faith in God may exist to give us confidence in our ideals and to inspire and quicken our

highest moral purposes. As the doctrine of the immanence of God circumvents scepticism by seeing in all the processes of nature the activity of the divine, ethical theism circumvents it by finding the divine in another sphere altogether. In the one case as in the other faith in God is possible to the man most completely under the control of the scientific spirit and most thoroughly in sympathy with the modern attitude. Of course, this kind of theism goes as far beyond mere naturalism and demands as much faith as any other kind. It is not science, but religion, and science can neither prove nor disprove it. It cannot be demonstrated; it must be taken on trust. It is a postulate, not a conclusion, a creative act of the moral will, not an enforced deduction from the observed phenomena of nature, and it may be rejected by him who will.

The question naturally emerges in connection with the ethical theism we are considering, what relation does the cosmos bear to the God thus postulated to meet the needs of our moral life? The tendency of such theism is undoubtedly to read divinity in terms of moral character rather than of substance or physical power. The words of Browning—

> "For the loving worm within its clod
> Were diviner than a loveless God
> Amid his worlds, I will dare to say"—

represent a sentiment that is very common among religious men to-day. And this, of course, puts a different face upon the whole question of God's rela-

tion to the universe. The conception of divinity does not of itself demand, as it once did, the assumption that God must be the Absolute which includes all that is, or the almighty Creator to whom all is due. If it be recognized by ethical theism that the world is of him, or his handiwork, it must be on other grounds altogether.

According to Kant, the happiness which constitutes a necessary element of the highest good is guaranteed only if a first cause be assumed to whom the order of nature is due, and who can therefore so control it as to make it contribute to the welfare of the virtuous. According to Fichte, the world exists simply as a sphere for the exercise of our moral wills, and cannot be regarded as in any way independent. According to Ritschl, God's supreme purpose to create a kingdom or society in which love and sympathy and service reign involves his creation of all that is to be a means to the realization of the great end.

Thus by Kant and Fichte and Ritschl, the world was teleologically explained as a means for the fulfillment of the purpose of God. And this, as a matter of fact, is the position of most of those who postulate God to satisfy the needs of the moral life. Whether it be interpreted idealistically or realistically, the universe in which we live, and which constitutes the theater of our moral as well as of our physical activity, is commonly thought of as due to God, its creator and preserver. This, of course, is to be sharply distinguished from the combination of cosmical and ethical theism referred to in the previous chapter, which be-

gins with the God of nature and then ascribes a moral character to him because the world contains moral beings, the highest flower of the evolutionary process. That is simply a revised form of the old argument from effect to cause. This is the method of postulation, that our ethical ideals may be validated and our life in their behalf made rational and sane.

I have said that many, probably the great majority of modern ethical theists, think of the world as created by God, and see in it the theater of moral living, or the means thereto. But, on the other hand, there are those who feel that to postulate a being who shall rationalize and guarantee our moral ideals does not necessarily involve postulating a creator of the universe. Some of these are convinced dualists, or pluralists, a tribe less common perhaps in modern days than the tribe of monists, but at present rapidly increasing among us. Some feel particularly the ethical difficulties involved in the assumption of God's cosmical control, and find it easier to conceive of him as the Christian Marcion did in the second century, as a moral power working in a world for which he is not himself responsible, or in other words as a limited instead of an absolute God. It is this kind of theism to which Professor William James has given expression in many of his writings, as for instance in the following passage in the volume entitled *A Pluralistic Universe:* "The only way to escape from the paradoxes and perplexities that a consistently thought out monistic universe suffers from as from a species of auto-intoxication, the mystery of the fall, namely, of

reality lapsing into appearance, truth into error, perfection into imperfection; of evil, in short; the mystery of universal determinism, of the block universe, eternal and without a history, etc.—the only way of escape, I say, from all this is to be frankly pluralistic and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an external environment and consequently is finite. . . . The line of least resistance, then, as it seems to me, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept along with the superhuman consciousness the notion that it is not all embracing, the notion in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite either in power or in knowledge or in both at once. These I need hardly tell you are the terms in which common men have usually carried on their active commerce with God; and the monistic perfections that make the notion of it so paradoxical practically and morally are the colder additions of remote professorial minds operating *in distans* upon conceptual substitutes for him alone." [1]

A still more thoroughgoing repudiation of the doctrine of divine creation is to be found in the personal idealism of Professor Howison, of the University of California, as set forth in his volume entitled *The Limits of Evolution and Other Essays,* published in 1901, and again with important appendices in 1904. Professor Howison is an ardent and consistent pluralist, maintaining the eternal, that is, the uncaused existence of a vast commonwealth of free spirits, each self-existent, self-active, and absolutely real. This common-

[1] P. 310 ff.

wealth of free spirits is made up of the perfect being God, and of imperfect beings or men who are sufficient in number to represent every degree of possible divergence from the ideal. The characteristic difference between God and men is not that God is infinite and men only finite, for, in a true sense all spirits are infinite, infinity being a synonym of eternity or self-existence. Rather the difference is that men possess a sensuous consciousness which God lacks. Hence in every man there is a conflict between the free reason moving in harmony with its ideal and the check given by its sensory nature. Human virtue consists in the control of the sensory nature by the ideal, and man's ethical life is a progressive overcoming of the lower by the higher. None of these spiritual beings is a creature or owes his origin to any other. All are alike eternal, ultimate and irreducible realities. God is not the creator but the ideal: the only being who fully expresses the ideal of all, and to whom, therefore, they all aspire, and by whom as a standard they measure themselves.

As men are not creatures of God, so nature, too, is not his creation. At the same time it is not eternal and self-existent as spirits are; on the contrary, it owes its reality to human minds, for Howison is a thoroughgoing idealist. He accounts for the fact that the world of nature is not a multiplicity of separate, unrelated, and wholly diverse worlds, not by appealing to the creative activity of God, as Berkeley did, or assuming an absolute consciousness which unifies all phenomena, as Hegel did, but by recognizing that God as ideal has a living relation to all other minds, and therefore also

to nature. That is, nature is one, because of the harmony of all spirits in the possession of a common ideal toward which they all strive. By his theory of eternal spirits independent of God, Howison is, of course, able to relieve God completely from the charge of being the author of evil, either natural or moral. God is responsible "only for the good which gradually arises in the world; and even for this good only in chief and not solely; for to every mind that promotes the good and helps to check the evil belongs indefeasibly the credit of his part in the increase of good and the decrease of evil." [1]

The notion of God as creator or efficient cause Howison regards as the root of a multitude of errors. Thus he says: "If we are to have a moral order in the world of ultimate reality, an order necessarily based upon the autonomy of the individual mind, we must abandon what may be called creationism; must abandon it in all its forms and preëminently in the two chief forms which have come into such serious conflict since the middle of the nineteenth century—I mean, of course, (1) the old dualistic (or transcendent) creationism of Hebraic theology, and (2) the later monistic (or immanential) creationism of Hegelianism and the evolutionary philosophy." [2] "The theme of literal creation," he says again, "is so inwrought into the structure of historic thinking that it will require long struggles on the part of criticism to get rid of it. Through the influence of the church and the philo-

[1] *The Limits of Evolution*, second edition, p. 392.
[2] Ibid., p. 417.

sophical schools it may be said to have become in fact institutional, so that combating it is like fighting organized civilization itself. Yet one can make the truth clear that only by the dislodgment of it is the success of the deeper principle possible, which is the real soul of civilization. I mean the principle of moral life, the life of duty freely followed." [1]

Here we come upon Howison's real and underlying interest which is through and through ethical. The moral life demands freedom, and genuine freedom, he maintains, is not possible if God be the creator of men, any more than if he be the great All of which men are but parts or expressions. Hence the doctrine of divine creation is to be wholly rejected.

There are other modern ethical theists who assume an entirely negative attitude toward the question of creation. They do not deny a creator and ruler of the world, but they are content to do without him. They do not find the moral and the physical always bound indissolubly together, and it seems to them conceivable that power adequate to the establishment of righteousness in the world, power adequate to the creation of the kingdom of God on earth, may exist even though the world be not itself the work of God. The need that has led them to postulate God requires no affirmations as to his relation to the world, and they are unwilling to make any such affirmations. This agnostic attitude, which is akin to the dominant spirit of modern science, is very marked in connection with modern ethical theism. It may not go as far as

[1] Ibid., p. 394.

has just been indicated, but it instinctively refrains from many of the assertions readily made by theists of another type.

Modern ethical theism has had its effect upon many other Christian doctrines, transforming or modifying them to a greater or less degree. By way of illustration reference may be made to Ritschl's interpretation of the person and work of Christ,[1] which was in sharpest contrast with the interpretations of Schleiermacher and Hegel referred to in the previous chapter. According to Ritschl, salvation consists in victory over the world, through trust in God and through devotion to his will, and the work of Christ is to arouse this trust and to inspire this devotion in other men. It was through his perfect trust in God, his complete knowledge of God's will, and his unswerving devotion to it, that Christ won his victory; and he mediates his knowledge, his trust, and his devotion to us by his life and teaching. His death was an entirely natural event, and had no special significance, except as it showed the completeness of his devotion to God's will and his faithfulness to the calling in which God had placed him. His resurrection, on the other hand, was a part of his victory. The judgment of the Christian world that he rose from the dead means the conviction that his victory was not partial merely and temporary, but complete and permanent.

To us, Ritschl maintains, Jesus has the value of God, for he mediates our victory over the world,

[1] See his *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. III, chapter VI.

which is what we need God for and seek him for. Communing with Christ we commune with God. Communion means to share in another's purpose and make it one's own; and the purpose of Christ is the purpose of God, for it is the highest purpose we know, and, if it be not God's, then God is less than Christ to us, and of such a God we have no need. The deity of Christ resides in his knowledge of the divine purpose and its mediation to us. His deity does not lie in the substance of which he is composed, nor does it depend in any way upon his origin. Neither preëxistence nor virgin birth has any significance, and hence there is no reason to assert either the one or the other. If a unity of essence between Christ and God be demanded, Ritschl replies that such a unity is of no consequence, and that in any case we can know nothing about it. The only unity discoverable by us, and the only kind that counts is a unity of sympathy, of will, and of purpose. This alone can manifest itself in the personal life, and no other life has any religious or ethical significance.

This conception of Christ's deity is to be sharply distinguished from that which finds it in the perfection of his character. It is frequently said: All men are sinners; Christ alone was sinless, and hence he must have been divine, perfection being an attribute of Deity alone. His divinity is thus proved by his moral perfectness and resides therein. This is a very common conclusion to-day on the part of those who have abandoned the old cosmical and substantial notions of an earlier age, and is entirely in line with the

controlling interest of modern ethical theism. But it is quite other than Ritschl's view, and it is beset with the difficulty that we cannot fully read the inner character or life of any man. If the divinity of Christ depends upon his absolute perfection, it is nothing more than a dogmatic assumption. The only sound basis for belief in the divinity of Christ is the work of Christ; not what he was, but what he has done for us and other men. The instinct of Christians of other ages was entirely sound in this matter, when they believed Christ divine because by him the nature of man was transformed, or the divine forgiveness of sin made possible. To this instinct Ritschl's interpretation, like Schleiermacher's, too, for that matter, does full justice. We assert the deity of Christ, not because of his moral perfection, though this Ritschl, too, believed in, but because he has given us the divine purpose by which we win our victory over the world, and has given it, not simply by word of mouth, but in his life, so that we witness the victory already won, which we, too, would win. The divinity of Christ lies wholly in the ethical sphere, according to Ritschl, but its mark is not perfection, a quantitative and static notion, but efficiency, a qualitative and dynamic one; not what he was in himself, but what he has done for us. This gives us our belief in his deity, as it gives us our belief in the deity of God himself.

Ritschl is often accused of denying the deity of Christ, because he found it solely in the sphere of ethical purpose. But, as a matter of fact, no one ever

assigned Christ a higher place. Instead of beginning with God and descending to Christ, his revealer, he began with Christ and found God through him. It was his need of victory that impelled him to search for God, and he found the means of victory in Christ. Christ thus acquired the value of God for Ritschl, and to accuse him of denying or minimizing the divinity of Christ is to turn his whole system upside down. If Ritschlianism is to be criticized at all in this matter, it is not that it assigns too low but too high a place to Christ in the experience of the Christian. And this accounts at least in part for the fact that he has had few disciples among the Unitarians.

If it be said that, as we come to a knowledge of God's purpose, and make it our own, we, too, attain to whatever divinity Christ possessed, Ritschl replies that Christ remains always supreme, for it was from him we learned the divine purpose, and fulfill it as completely as we may we can never alter our relation to him. He is the Master and we the disciples. He has revealed the purpose to us; we have learned it from him; and the victory we achieve but confirms the divineness of him from whom we gained the means of victory.

Nor is the ascription of divinity to Christ, in Ritschl's opinion, unimportant, or a mere matter of words. If we withhold divinity from him, it is because we seek for something else in God; because we are not satisfied to find him in the sphere of moral purpose, or because something else is higher to us than the kingdom of God which Christ revealed. In

other words, according to Ritschl, if we refrain from ascribing divinity to Christ, it is either because our moral ideals are not his, or because our theism is not exclusively ethical. The divinity of Christ must, therefore, be recognized, not as a doctrine of minor importance to Ritschl, or as a mere appendix to his theological system, but as an expression of the real essence of his moral ideal and the very heart of his religious faith. At the same time, the mistake should not be made of identifying his conception of Christ's divinity with the traditional orthodox doctrine, Catholic and Protestant. Like Schleiermacher's conception, it is as different from that doctrine as it well could be.

The man who accepts either Schleiermacher's or Ritschl's interpretation of Christ's person and work lives in another world from that in which the Unitarian controversy arose, and the old shibboleths mean nothing to him. Christ is his leader and master; through Christ he finds God. Satisfied of this, he cares not for the old definitions of unity and trinity, for the old distinctions between substance and person, for the old assertions of equality and subordination. Nor is he interested in any attempted discrimination between the Deity of Christ and his divinity. In Christ he finds the consciousness of God, or the purpose of God, which he, too, would share, and, sharing it, he is saved. If this be a Christian's experience, he can never count Christ other than divine; if this be not his experience, it can make little difference to him whether Christ be divine or not.

Thus modern ethical theism profoundly modifies the old conceptions of the person and work of Christ, the nature and means of salvation, the character of the Christian life, and many others, relieving them from the physical and legal interpretations which formerly attached to them, and reading them in exclusively ethical terms. Though so different in its interest and in many of its effects from the doctrine of divine immanence, it is equally in line with important intellectual and moral tendencies of our own day, and, sometimes in connection with immanence, sometimes independently of it and even in opposition to it, is more and more widely affecting contemporary religious thought.

Other forms of ethical theism, besides those described in this chapter, have been current in modern times, but I have not thought it important to discuss them here, for they have been for the most part simply reproductions or modifications of inherited ideas, or have resulted from the combination of the ethical with some other and alien interest. It has seemed worth while, in this chapter, to deal, by way of illustration, only with certain relatively consistent forms in which the break with traditional views is most complete.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

In the medieval conception of God's character, and not in it alone, disparate notions were combined which never found complete reconciliation. God was thought of as the avenger of sin, and, at the same time as a merciful being, providing men with a way of escape from the consequences of their transgressions. The belief that God punishes sin was supposed to be necessary for morality's sake. Man is vicious by nature, and needs to be deterred by fear from following his native impulses. A knowledge of the natural effects of sin is not enough. The apprehension of punishment by an infinite being is required to keep him virtuous. Thus the pagan Rhadamanthus entered the Christian pantheon, or rather, was identified with the supreme God of heaven and earth.

The relation between God and man was conceived in juridic terms. God is the infinite sovereign, and man's chief duty is to submit to him. The attitude demanded is humility of the most extreme kind. Sin consists in rebellion against God, and has its roots in human pride and self-confidence. It is an indignity to God, an infringement of his glory, an insult to

his majesty. It is not simply corruption, disease, or defect, the failure to measure up to an ideal standard which may be conceived as resulting naturally in fatal consequences; it is personal rebellion against a personal God, and hence requires punishment at his hands. In order to provide adequately for such punishment, hell was created as a place of eternal torment, to which the wicked go after death. That the torment, according to Christian teaching, was eternal, instead of lasting only for a time, was regarded by the Christian apologist, Justin Martyr, as one of the principal marks of the superiority of Christianity to Platonism. As a deterrent from sin the Christian doctrine seemed far more effective.

With the notion of God as an avenger of sin, which Christianity shared with Judaism and paganism, was combined another idea, commonly spoken of as the specific contribution of Christianity, but actually existent also, both in paganism and Judaism, of a God of mercy saving men from the consequences of their evil deeds. The love of God taught by Christ was understood to mean his provision of a way of escape from the vengeance which he himself takes on sin. Thus the two attributes of righteousness and mercy were set over against each other in the character of God. He is righteous in punishing; he is merciful in providing a way of escape from his own vengeance. He is at once a just judge and a gracious saviour. Eternal punishment is the great evidence of his justice; the Christian scheme of salvation the great evidence of his mercy. His justice might have

exhibited itself also in the heavenly reward which it was believed he would bestow upon the righteous, were it not that all virtue was recognized as supernatural in its origin and the fruit of divine grace. And hence, though God rewarded those making the right use of the grace received through the sacraments, not his justice but his mercy was displayed in those rewards.

This common Catholic interpretation of the divine character passed over into Protestantism. It is true that Luther thought of God chiefly as a loving and gracious Father, but he was loving and gracious only because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and only to those who shared the benefits of that sacrifice. To the sinner he remained the righteous judge, a God of wrath. This dualism in the conception of God had an effect among Protestants similar to that which it had in Catholicism. It proved difficult to distinguish as sharply as Luther had done the attitude of God toward the believer and the unbeliever. By Calvin and the Reformed theologians in general the relation between God and the Christian was pictured in the old juridic way, and the sovereignty of God, rather than His fatherhood, became the controlling doctrine of the Reformed system. The Christian is a subject of God as truly as anyone else. Obedience is the supreme duty and humility the cardinal virtue. God was recognized, to be sure, as a father, but this did not mean that a new conception of the relationship between God and man was substituted for the old, that the idea of the family took the place of the state.

Fatherhood was interpreted in the sense of absolute authority. As Zwingli remarks, "We call God Father, because he can do what he pleases with us."

Indeed in their effort to undermine and destroy the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification by works, the Reformers, Luther included, made the divine sovereignty far more absolute and unconditional than did their Catholic contemporaries. The ability and independence of man were repudiated in an even more extreme way than in Catholicism, and by the Reformed theologians God was pictured as creating men solely for his own glory and decreeing human sin in order that in the eternal punishment of some he might manifest his attribute of justice and in the salvation of others his attribute of mercy. The world was reduced to a mere theater for the display of the divine attributes, and men became simply marionettes to whom God assigned such rôles as he pleased.

By Calvin and those who came after him the attribute of righteousness was regarded as rooted of necessity in the very essence of God, while the attribute of mercy was supposed to be optional with him, and to have its seat in his will. He must be righteous; he might be merciful, if he chose; but he was under no obligation, either to himself or to others, to show mercy to anyone. Righteousness meant treating everybody as he deserved. As nobody deserves anything but punishment, righteousness could manifest itself only in punishing. Mercy meant treating a person better than he deserved, and such treatment no one could demand. It is interesting to notice that infinity

was supposed to involve righteousness, as it involved omnipotence and omnipresence, but mercy was in no way implied by it. An infinite God might lack the attribute altogether, or might exercise it when and how he chose.

Gradually, with the spread of the idea of the ability and worth of the natural man, traditional notions of God began to change. As human depravity was minimized, the vindictive justice of God seemed less important, and as emphasis was increasingly laid upon the natural constitution of things, it came more and more to be believed that sin breeds its own painful consequences and needs no supernatural sanctions. Already in Socinianism we find doubt thrown upon the doctrine of eternal punishment, and by many of the rationalists it was rejected altogether. Under the same general influence opposition arose to the doctrine of unconditional predestination and came to more or less emphatic expression in Socinianism in Arminianism, in rationalism, and in American Unitarianism. The opposition was greatly strengthened, particularly in the eighteenth century, by the rapid spread of the idea of human equality and the doctrine of equal rights for all, which found ultimately so striking an utterance in the French Revolution and in the American Declaration of Independence. As the rights of men over against each other and over against their rulers were emphasized, their rights over against God received fuller recognition. Absolute and unconditioned sovereignty was more and more

widely regarded as an anomaly, whether in human or divine government.

In general the change may be phrased as the substitution of the spirit of democracy for that of feudalism. The God of Calvinism was consistent with the feudal notion of society which dominated the Middle Ages. As democratic ideals crowded out the aristocratic and authoritarian ideals of an earlier day, of course the character of God appeared in a different perspective. His absoluteness and his responsibility only to his own character gave way to the notion of relativity and responsibility to men. They, too, have rights, and God is bound to respect them. Not his own good, or his own character, or his own pleasure, but the good of the people, of the commonwealth of humanity, is paramount, and must dictate divine as well as human activity. The democratic ideal might be long in realizing itself in human societies and states. It is still, indeed, largely unrealized. But it affected the theories of men in every realm not less in theological than in political affairs. Men might hesitate to apply democratic principles in a world still under the sway of aristocratic traditions, but it was easy to apply such principles in the sphere of theology, where practice had no place. Practical religion, like politics and economics, might still resist the entrance of the new idea, and many churches might remain as much aristocratic corporations as ever. But the thought of God, the interpretation of his character, was everywhere affected, even where it was not transformed.

There was an immense amount of sentimentalism in it all. The *a priori* character of the reasoning and the disregard of observed facts and conditions were as complete as in the case of Calvinism. The new doctrine of God was based as much upon mere abstract reasoning as the old. And the notion of human rights and equality was drawn even less from the facts of life than the traditional notion of total depravity. But the spirit of the modern age was in it, nevertheless—the self-confidence and self-assertion of a new era in the history of man. Soberer thoughts might follow. The humble study of facts might take the place in course of time of the unbridled theorizing of the rationalists. But they succeeded at any rate in permanently breaking the dominance of a system utterly alien to the temper of the modern world.

While the spirit of the modern age was thus asserting itself against a theology which had made God everything and man nothing, and had interpreted the divine in terms of absolute power, other influences were leading to growing emphasis upon the love of God and to a reconstruction of the idea of divine fatherhood so widely lost in Christian thought. The new humanitarianism of the eighteenth century made it necessary for those who still believed in God to read him in humanitarian terms. As benevolence and kindness and sympathy and helpfulness became cardinal virtues among men, they could not but become prominent in men's picture of God. He could not be worse than they. He could not treat his creatures with a disregard of their comfort and happiness

which would disgrace an earthly ruler. The note of contempt for the character of the God of traditional orthodoxy, particularly the God of Calvinism, is very noteworthy in the liberal writings of the eighteenth century, whether religious or secular.

The same tendency to emphasize the fatherhood of God was promoted by the growing interest in the life of Christ, which marked the dawning nineteenth century. The general recrudescence of the historical spirit, which succeeded the dominance of rationalism, accrued to the benefit of Christianity as of many other things. It became more and more the fashion to study origins, to trace movements and institutions back to their beginnings, and knowledge of the character and career of Jesus Christ profited greatly from this tendency. The period now began of lives of Christ—a period in which we still live. From every point of view, rationalistic, romantic, liberal and conservative, his life and teaching were set forth, and an inevitable result, of particular interest to us in this connection, was to recall theologians to his interpretation of the character and will of God. Falling in as they did with the prevailing tendency of the age, those utterances of Jesus which teach God's fatherhood and love, naturally received chief attention, as they have down to our own day. And certainly, though this rendering of Jesus' portrait of the divine character may be both incomplete and one-sided, at any rate it does justice to elements widely lost in the theology of historic Protestantism.

The idea of the divine goodness, which in the

eighteenth century more and more displaced the old emphasis upon the divine power, took all sorts of forms. A very common notion, not at all unnatural in view of the situation, was that God's sole aim is to make men happy; that the attribute of goodness which is supreme in the divine character prompts him to do all he can to promote human comfort and satisfaction. The expressions of this idea are very numerous in eighteenth-century literature, both orthodox and rationalistic. Archbishop Tillotson represents God's goodness as that attribute which leads him to seek the happiness of others[1]; while the deist Matthew Tindal declares that "The ultimate end of all God's Laws, and consequently, of all Religion, is human happiness."[2]

In extraordinary contrast with the common thought of his day was the idea of divine love held by our own great American theologian, Jonathan Edwards. It is a striking commentary upon the situation existing in his time that, though a thoroughgoing Calvinist, and devoted to the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty, he should yet make love, or benevolence, as he preferred to call it, the chief virtue both in man and God. But it was no mere sentimentalism, or desire for the happiness of the creature, that Edwards understood by the divine benevolence. He read the word in a philosophical rather than an ethical sense. Benevolence is approval of being or delight in being. True benevolence is strictly proportioned to the de-

[1] See his sermons on *The Goodness of God.*
[2] *Christianity as Old as the Creation,* chap. IX.

gree of being in its object. The greater the being, that is, the more of existence it possesses, the more it should be loved. The supreme object of benevolence is being in general, or God. Others possess real being only in so far as they partake of God. To love any creature, whether oneself, or another, independently of God, or in greater degree than its scale of being warrants, is wrong. The evil of self-love is due not to its selfishness, but to the fact that it accords to a creature a disproportionate amount of affection. Undue affection for another is as bad as undue affection for oneself. Only in subordination to love for God is love for a creature justified. Love, if it is to be virtuous, must be proportioned, not to the need, but to the excellence, of the object loved. Holy love is love for a holy object, not love which would make the unholy holy.[1] The contrast between this conception of benevolence and the gospel of Christ, with its emphasis upon love for the unlovely and unworthy, is as great as its contrast with the sentimentalism of Edwards' own day.

Kant taught that God is at once holy and good, and is therefore to be both reverenced and loved. His holiness means that his supreme interest is in virtue; his goodness that he promotes the coming of the kingdom of God, that is, the combination of virtue with the happiness suited thereto. Thus, in spite of his controlling emphasis on disinterested virtue, and his complete repudiation of the notion of reward, Kant

[1] For references see my *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 182 ff.

did not quite succeed in breaking away from rationalistic eudæmonism. The love of God, according to him, really has reference, as was commonly believed in the eighteenth century, solely to the happiness of the creature, that is, in this case, of the virtuous.

In Schleiermacher, on the other hand, we find an altogether different conception of the nature and significance of divine love. He made it the chief of God's attributes, as almost every one was doing in his day. Indeed, he adopted for himself the Johannine declaration, "God is Love," as the completest definition of the divine nature. But he denied that the love of God has reference to the happiness of men. Happiness is an entirely subordinate matter. God's love exercises itself in arousing in men the consciousness of the divine, which is life's greatest blessing. One with God, as all men are in essence, they are commonly conscious only of their single and separate and finite selves. Their supreme need is to become aware that they are truly part of a larger whole—the infinite God—and to meet this need is the controlling aim of the divine love. This, of course, is as far removed as possible from the current eudæmonism of the eighteenth century, and marks a high degree of spirituality in the conception of God's character.

The philosopher Hegel, too, interpreted God as love. But, while with Schleiermacher the conception was religious and æsthetic, rather than ethical; with Hegel it was wholly metaphysical. Love is a name for the eternal process of the evolution of the absolute. God loves himself, but, in loving himself, he

loves all that exists, for all is simply the objectification of himself.

During the nineteenth century much was made of the love of God, interpreted in hedonistic fashion, in evangelical as well as in other circles. The righteousness and justice of God retired into the background, and the old reaction against Calvinism expressed itself, both in this country and abroad, in soft and sentimental assertions of the divine love, which often seemed to deprive God of moral character altogether, and to make him a mere indulgent father, interested solely in the comfort and pleasure of his children, and not at all in their characters or achievements. This was carried so far as to breed another reaction in many quarters. Such a God seemed to many unworthy of human worship and enervating to human character. The effort to restore the conception of divine righteousness and to make the doctrine of God more virile and commanding has expressed itself in many forms. Sometimes it has resulted simply in the reproduction of the old idea of righteousness as punishment, many preachers, particularly, thinking to mend matters by reminding their hearers that God punishes sin as well as rewards virtue. But this dualistic conception of God is too crass and primitive for the thinking man of the modern world. We have passed too far beyond the old legal interpretation of life to make such ideas either credible or tolerable.

Others have tried to meet the difficulty by representing God as chiefly concerned in the righteousness rather than the happiness of his creatures. Righteous-

ness, as the attribute which leads God to promote virtue, is put in the forefront and emphasized even more than love. It is thus interpreted in a higher sense than in traditional theology; but there is still left a conflict of interests in the character of God which accounts for much of the uncertainty and ineffectiveness of modern preaching. One man preaches the divine love, another the divine righteousness; or the same man preaches now the divine love and now the divine righteousness, and there remains with the auditor a divided notion of God, which is inevitably either confusing or self-destructive.

The most important contribution of modern times to an understanding of the divine character was made by Ritschl. He, too, like Schleiermacher and Hegel, interpreted God as love. But the love of God, as he understood it, was not the impulse to make his creatures comfortable, or to promote the happiness of the virtuous; nor did it find exercise in imparting the divine nature, or in awakening men to a consciousness of the divine. It was rather the will to promote the spirit of love among men. That God is love means that he would have love reign among his creatures, that he would build the divine kingdom on earth, a kingdom of mutual sympathy and helpfulness. The divine love eventuates, according to Ritschl, not in anything passive, but in active social service. It accomplishes its purpose in arousing men not to their oneness with the divine, but to their duty toward their fellows, not to love for God, but to love for men. "Therein," Ritschl says, "that we in the kingdom of

God love our brethren is the will of God realized." [1]

In Ritschl's reading of the divine character the old schism between love and righteousness entirely disappears. The divine righteousness manifests itself not in taking vengeance upon sin, nor even in promoting righteousness among men, but in the constancy of God's purpose of love. He is righteous because he swerves not from his eternal will to establish the kingdom of God, to build upon earth a divine society of human love and sympathy and service. This contribution of Ritschl's was due simply to his reading into Kant's conception of God as the purpose to promote the highest good a genuinely Christian content, and to his consistency in bringing all his thought under the dominance of a single controlling principle. Where the love and the righteousness of God are interpreted as Ritschl interpreted them, it is possible to preach the divine love without fear of emasculating or enervating human character, and to preach the divine righteousness without fear of belittling or obscuring the divine love. The age-long schism in the character of God, which played such havoc with medieval and evangelical piety, involving the Christian life in a constant dualism between hope and fear, and tending always to keep the instinct of self-interest in control, is finally done completely away, and the conception of God becomes for the first time in Christian theology at once ethical and consistent through and through.

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 268.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOCIAL EMPHASIS

In marked contrast with the prevailing ethical ideals of our own day the ideals of traditional Christianity have been as a rule controllingly individualistic. Under the influence of the current dualistic notions of the ancient world the Christian life was early interpreted as the scene of a constant struggle between the powers of good and the powers of evil. Over against the Spirit of God were supposed to be arrayed the world, the flesh, and the devil, all striving to overmaster the Christian and drag him to perdition. The natural man is controlled by the lusts of the flesh and the love of the world; the spiritual man belongs to a higher realm and has set his affections on things above. His character expresses itself particularly in victory over bodily passions and in superiority to earthly pleasures—in holiness and unworldliness. The present life is at its worst wholly corrupt; at its best but temporary. The more completely detached from its interests and concerns, the more Christian a man seemed. Not harmony with one's environment, as in classical Greek ethics, but revolt against it was commonly inculcated. This revolt, as a rule, took the

form of an effort to escape from the present world, rather than to make it over into the Kingdom of God. The view of the world was usually pessimistic to the last degree. It is doomed to speedy and inevitable destruction. The ascetic tendency, joined with this pessimistic estimate of the world, led naturally to monasticism, and from the fifth century on, though only a minority of Christians ever became monks, the monastic life was generally regarded as the most consistent expression of the Christian ideal, and its faithful representatives were counted the real heroes of the Church.

Jesus' emphasis upon love for one's neighbors was not forgotten by the Christians of the ancient and medieval world. From the beginning love has been a cardinal Christian virtue, and has borne rich fruit in all the Christian centuries. But it has been socially of less benefit than it might have been, partly because eternal salvation has seemed so overwhelmingly important as to make earthly welfare and happiness dwindle into insignificance, and to enlist the devotion of the most unselfish men in the effort to save their brothers' souls instead of bodies; partly because, when love is viewed as a virtue, it is natural to find its value rather in what it expresses than in what it accomplishes. Already in the earliest days the tendency was abroad to reduce brotherly love to the dimensions of mere charity, and to give it as such a place with other so-called meritorious acts among the means of salvation. As Augustine remarked, "Fasting and almsgiving are the wings upon which prayer flies to

God." When poverty was thus thought of as an opportunity for the exercise of Christian virtue, there might be the relief of poverty on a large scale, but acquiescence in the conditions making for its continuance was all too easy.

Equally important was the instinctive conservatism of the ancient and medieval Church, with its invincible prejudice against change. Charity there might be in plenty, and even philanthropy, but to think of so transforming the world as to make charity and philanthropy unnecessary was impossible. In this connection Christ's words, "The poor ye have always with you," were sadly abused as an explicit prophecy of a necessary and permanent social situation.

With the other-worldly and ascetic tendency in the ancient and medieval Church was closely connected the growing notion that religious duties are more important than moral, and religious offenses of greater heinousness than any other kind. Prayer and similar religious exercises came to be thought of as the Christian man's noblest occupation; and sacrilege, heresy, and schism as the worst of crimes. Instead of regarding the performance of one's ordinary human duties as the truest service of God, the tendency was to recognize a still loftier range of obligations, and the religious man in the highest sense was he who made these his chief concern. The effect was decidedly vicious, distracting attention from the everyday concerns of life, and often making men worse instead of better citizens of this world. Jesus strenuously opposed this attitude, which was widely prevalent in

the Judaism of his time. Love for God, he taught, is to be exhibited chiefly in love for one's neighbors. But the old spirit reappeared at an early day and soon became all controlling. It was carried so far by Augustine that he denied altogether the virtue of a morality not based upon religion. Human affection, benevolence, regard for the public good—however noble the actions to which such impulses lead—are wholly evil unless dominated and controlled by love for God and the desire to do his will.

Under all these circumstances it is not surprising that, while there was, it is true, a great deal of charity, there was little of what we should call social interest and effort in the ancient and medieval Church; and this in spite of the fact that Christians were as earnestly endeavoring to follow Christ as they are today, and believed as sincerely as now that they were actually doing his will.

It was in his conception of the Christian life that Luther broke most completely with traditional Christianity. At almost every point he repudiated the common Catholic view. But those who came after him failed to understand or to appreciate his attitude, and the old dualism, asceticism, other-worldliness, and individualism continued to prevail within Protestantism, and gave the Christian life of the Protestant churches a character essentially identical, except in details, with that of the Catholics.

The rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made two important advances. In the first place they minimized the category of special religious

duties, and put the common moral virtues into the forefront, or emphasized them to the exclusion of all else. It is true that many maintained that the Christian life includes the observance of certain religious practices—obedience to the so-called positive precepts of the gospel—but these were at most few and unimportant, and the tendency was to make less and less of them, or, as in the case of the deists, to deny their binding character altogether. As Kant says in his *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason,* "Everything over and above a good life which a man thinks he can do, in order to please God, is mere superstition and idolatry." [1]

In the second place, the rationalists commonly made benevolence the one and all-embracing virtue. Asceticism and other-worldliness, reëmphasized in contemporary pietism and evangelicalism, they wholly disapproved. The good of man, not the glory of God, is the highest end of life, and virtue is measured by its promotion of that end. The influences making in this direction were many. The awakened sense of the dignity and worth of the natural man, which marked the modern age, led to a growing recognition of his rights and an increasing interest in his welfare. It came to be seen that not charity is needed, but justice —respect for men as men and proper regard for what is due them as birthright members of the human commonwealth. Reaction against the harshness of the Reformed theology, with its sovereign disregard of the rights and happiness of men, also counted for

[1] IV, 2, § 2.

much. More and more the good of man took the place of the glory of God as a motive for human conduct.

Again, the self-centered character, as well as the asceticism and other-worldliness of the traditional ideal, both Catholic and Protestant, made disinterested regard for the good of others seem by contrast alone worthy to be called virtue. Particularly in the seventeenth century, when religious intolerance, bigotry, and strife were at their height, thinking men were driven to seek a common principle of conduct, and they found it naturally in the spirit of universal good will, which was so sadly violated in the conflicts of the sects.

Still further, steady improvement in the means of communication, increasing travel, and growing commerce tended to break down local prejudice and race hatred, to arouse an interest in the manners and customs of distant peoples, and to promote a spirit of cosmopolitanism unmatched since the days of the Roman Empire. The influence of the Stoics, who were eagerly studied by the moralists of the eighteenth century, counted for much in this connection. Their cosmopolitanism and their emphasis upon common humanity were particularly congenial to those who felt the evils of sectarianism and party spirit, and the phrase, "the brotherhood of man," became one of the most potent catchwords of the century.

The teaching of Jesus was also not wholly without influence. In their effort to find some common platform and some common principles of conduct upon

which all religious men and particularly all Christians could unite, many rationalists went back to Christ's teaching, and tried to substitute his simple gospel of love for God and man for the elaborate theologies and rituals of the sects. As in the age of the renaissance some of them were more, others less sincere in their devotion to Christ; but in any case the appeal to his ethical teaching constituted an effective protest against the inhumanity of many of the principles and practices of traditional Christianity. Of interest in this connection is the attitude of the Evangelicals of the period. Though they made much of the ascetic and other-worldly ideals of traditional Christianity, they yet emphasized also, in an unusual degree, love and service of one's fellows, and applied their principles, often on a large scale, in one or another form of practical philanthropy.

Whatever the influences which contributed to the change of spirit and interest, the eighteenth century was the humanitarian century above all that had preceded it, and to it belongs the credit of establishing the supreme obligation of humanitarianism in the moral consciousness of the modern man.

But there is more in the modern social emphasis than mere humanitarianism. There is in it also the conviction that a reconstruction of human society is at once imperative and possible.[1] This is what chiefly differentiates it from the philanthropy of other days. The eighteenth century witnessed, as we have seen, the rapid spread of humanitarianism. It witnessed

[1] Cf., Seeley's *Ecce Homo,* chap. XVII.

also the development and growing prevalence of the idea of progress. In the Middle Ages the belief in the permanence of existing conditions was in control. Whether right or wrong, things had always been as they are, and would always continue so. The world was necessarily a faulty and imperfect place. One might well be grateful that it was not worse; one could not expect it to be better. The golden age—the age of innocence and happiness—lay in the distant past. In the future there could be only continued evil and misery until the end came and the earth was no more. For ideal conditions of any kind one must look away from earth to another and heavenly realm. Impatience with the existing state of things argued a lack of trust in God and was but a form of impiety.

In the train of renaissance and reformation came a gradual change of attitude. The great transformations that had taken place encouraged men to believe that everything was possible. The conviction that the world was growing better, and that man had been gradually rising from a state of ignorance and barbarism and might yet hope to attain a position far higher and happier than he had ever occupied, drove out the old notion of the original paradisiacal state, followed by a fall and subsequent degeneration. The literature of the eighteenth century is full of the idea of the indefinite perfectibility of man and society.

The tendency of this idea was at first to promote complacency, and to foster satisfaction with the present state of things, supposed to be so much better than

that of earlier centuries—a complacency and satisfaction still widely dominant in all parts of the western world. But once the new idea gained general prevalence it led to multiplying criticisms of existing conditions and to a growing desire to see them altered. New standards began to be applied, and new demands to be made. The French revolution was but the most dramatic expression of the new spirit. Coincident with the political and social upheaval consequent thereupon, arose the economic disturbances caused by the introduction of machinery into many forms of industry and by the breaking up of the old system of production. The condition of the laboring classes seemed to be growing steadily worse at the very time when the doctrine of human progress was brilliantly vindicating itself in the increasing wealth and comfort of the world at large and in the increasing control of man over the forces of nature. In the awakening consciousness of this glaring inconsistency the modern social conscience was born. The spirit of humanitarianism is in it, sympathy with those less fortunate than oneself and sensitiveness to their needs, and there is in it also the belief in the possibility of social betterment. When men, filled with an enthusiasm for humanity and vividly conscious of existing evils, came to believe that this world could be so transformed that the poverty and misery and slavery under which masses of human beings groaned and toiled would be no more, philanthropy in the old sense became a discredited thing, and the modern age of social service and reform began.

Among the earliest champions of the new cause were Robert Owen in England and Henri Saint Simon and Charles Fourier in France. So long as the efforts of the great manufacturer Owen were confined to improving the conditions under which his workmen lived, and giving them model homes and schools, he was everywhere admired and applauded. But when he began to denounce the existing economic system and to advocate socialism and even communism, he lost most of his friends, except among the laboring classes, and became the most warmly hated man in England. His various schemes of social reconstruction all came to nought; but his influence helped to improve the status of the laboring man and particularly to awaken the social conscience of his countrymen. In the so-called Christian socialism of Frederic Dennison Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hughes and others, which took its rise in 1848 as a result of the failure of the ill-starred Chartist movement, Owen's principle of coöperation was vigorously emphasized and declared to be alone consistent with the Christian spirit. The principle was even put into practice in coöperative societies, which it was hoped would solve the existing difficulties and effect a steady improvement in the condition of the working classes. They proved only partially successful, and were compelled finally to confine themselves to the work of distribution instead of production, but the principle of coöperation which the early Christian socialists did much to commend to their countrymen has since been

applied in England and elsewhere on a large scale with important economic results.

Though the specific movement started by Maurice and his associates lasted but a short time, the influence of their emphasis on social service has been felt ever since, both in England and in America. Social duty and responsibility, of which they made so much, became a favorite theme with the moral and religious teachers of the second half of the nineteenth century. In this connection the influence of Carlyle and Ruskin counted for a great deal. They were even more conservative than the early Christian socialists, and were utterly hostile to radical social reform, but they preached the gospel of social service with tremendous power and effectiveness, and the conscience of multitudes was stirred to the depths.

Most of the early apostles of social reform believed that the desired reformation was to be accomplished from above rather than below. They were sure that the upper classes, convinced finally of the desirability of the new order of society so fervently preached by its advocates, would voluntarily relinquish their privileges and introduce a new era of social justice and equal rights. Particularly they deprecated class war and all efforts on the part of labor to force the hand of capital. Only by friendly coöperation, not by hostility and strife, could the desired end be achieved, as Owen, for instance, was especially fond of insisting. But gradually the conviction grew in the minds, both of social reformers and of laborers, that this was an unfounded hope, and

that if the new order of things were to be established it must be by the active effort of the working classes themselves and in face of the opposition of the ruling classes. Thus a new class consciousness began to emerge which was almost wholly lacking when Owen and Saint Simon commenced their work. The development of this class consciousness is the most striking social phenomenon of modern times. No one did more to arouse it than the Germans, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx, the former the founder of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, the latter the father of international socialism. In his famous communistic manifesto of 1848 Marx called upon the proletariat of all lands to organize for the vindication of their rights, and since then there has been a growing conviction among the laboring classes of all western lands of the necessity of making common cause against the capitalistic class in the struggle for social justice. At first there was but a vague idea of what was wanted. The earliest manifestations of the new class consciousness were exceedingly inchoate and chaotic. But gradually, particularly through the efforts of Marx, some degree of clearness, both as to ends and means, has been attained, and the power of organized labor has vastly increased.

Meanwhile the Utopian dreams of earlier socialists have been generally displaced by what its adherents call scientific socialism. Upon the basis of an elaborate study of history Marx undertook to demonstrate that socialism is the result of natural economic forces, and is the state of society to which western

peoples are inevitably tending. Socialism, according to Marx, is not the mere dream of humanitarian spirits—a Utopia wholly alien to the present condition of things; it is simply another stage in the development of human society to which modern industrialism and capitalism are rapidly carrying us. The socialization of the means of production and distribution is steadily going on. When it is complete, the socialistic state will be a reality.

The scientific character of Marx's social philosophy and the definiteness of his economic program have greatly strengthened the cause of socialism, multiplying its adherents, binding them more closely together, and enhancing their confidence and enthusiasm. But a natural result has been the tendency to identify all socialism with Marxism and to regard the characteristics of the latter as essential features of the former. This is seen, for instance, in the widespread notion that socialism is necessarily anti-Christian and irreligious. For this belief there is some justification in the history of socialism, quite apart from the Marxian form of it, which was avowedly materialistic. Modern socialists, in fact, have very commonly been opposed to Christianity and often to all religion. Owen's attitude in the matter is interesting and significant. At an early day he broke with Christianity, finding it bigoted, cruel, selfish, and wholly blind to the needs of the poorer classes. But he did not as a consequence renounce all religion. On the contrary he retained a belief in a Supreme Being of infinite benevolence, whose worship consists in brotherly love

and labor for the poor and suffering, and he wished this religion substituted for existing Christianity in the new social order which he hoped to see founded.

Saint Simon's attitude was similar, but he called the new religion of social service Christianity, distinguishing it, as the Christianity of Christ and alone truly divine, from the current forms of Catholicism and Protestantism. In his last work, *Le Nouveau Christianisme,* published in 1825, he attacked both Catholicism and Protestantism in very telling fashion, and denounced them as heretical because they had apostatized from Christ's religion of humanity. "God has said men ought to conduct themselves toward each other as brethren. This sublime principle embraces all there is of divinity in the Christian religion." [1] "If Luther's reformation had been complete, he would have conceived and proclaimed the following doctrine; he would have said to the Pope and the cardinals: 'Your predecessors have sufficiently perfected the theory of Christianity; they have sufficiently propagated this theory; Europeans are sufficiently imbued with it; it is now the general application of this doctrine which ought to occupy you. True Christianity ought to make men happy, not only in heaven, but also on earth. . . . You ought no longer to confine yourselves to preaching to the faithful of all classes that the poor are the cherished children of God. You ought to use frankly and energetically all the powers and all the means acquired by the church militant to ameliorate promptly

[1] *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin,* Vol. XXIII, p. 108.

the moral and physical existence of the most numerous class. The preliminary and preparatory labors of Christianity are finished. You have a task to fulfill much more satisfying than that accomplished by your predecessors. This task consists in establishing the universal and final Christianity. It consists in organizing the whole human race according to the fundamental principle of divine morality. To fulfill this task you ought to make this principle the foundation and the end of all social institutions.' " [1] "Yes, I believe that Christianity is a divine institution, and I am persuaded that God accords special protection to those who try to bring all human institutions into subjection to the fundamental principle of this sublime doctrine." [2]

Saint Simon's attitude has been that of many other social reformers, both within and without the ranks of his followers. But most modern socialists have apparently been either hostile or indifferent not to Christianity alone but to all religion. The reasons for this attitude are not far to seek. As one of the great institutions of the existing social order, the Christian Church is not unnaturally regarded with dislike by many of those who would reconstruct society altogether. Organized religion is inevitably conservative, and cannot do otherwise than resist revolution and radical change. This has done much to promote the belief on the part of the laboring classes, when they have begun to awaken to class-conscious-

[1] Ibid., p. 147 ff.
[2] Ibid., p. 188.

ness, that the Christian Church by its very nature is an institution belonging to the well-to-do, existing only for them and concerned solely with their interests. Moreover, Christianity has commonly preached contentment with one's lot, and has endeavored to reconcile men to the evils of their earthly existence, pointing them to a future life of blessedness as the recompense for all their sufferings here. This has led many to regard it as the chief obstacle to social reform and often to condemn religion altogether as tending necessarily to distract attention from existing social needs or to foster indifference to them. Again it is to be remembered that socialists are radicals in their attitude toward the existing order, and it is not unnatural that they should be radicals in religion as in other matters, and should find the negative tendencies in modern religious life and thought more congenial than the positive. Still more important is the fact that the economic interests of the proletariat are necessarily so much to the fore in the socialistic movement, which has sprung out of existing economic conditions, that all other interests are easily forgotten, at any rate for the time being. Finally it should not be overlooked that socialism itself, the cause not of an individual, but of a whole class of society, and that the most destitute class, meets those needs of reverence, devotion, self-forgetfulness, enthusiasm, and hope to which religion commonly ministers, and thus constitutes for multitudes an adequate substitute for religion, or perhaps it might fairly be said a new religion in place of the old.

The alienation of modern socialists from the Church has done probably more than anything else to turn the attention of the Church to social questions and to enlist its support for social reform. Among social prophets and teachers there have always been Christians as well as non-Christians, notably the Christian socialists of whom I have already spoken. Those within the Church have felt the new wave of social enthusiasm as well as those without. But the Church as an organization has been awakened to the situation chiefly by the hostility of which it has become conscious. It must meet the new conditions or lose its place as the religion of the people. As a result many organizations have been formed, such as the Guild of St. Matthew and the Christian Social Union in England, the Freunde der Christliche Welt and the Christlich-sozialer Congress in Germany, and the Christian Social Union and the Brotherhood of the Kingdom in America, with the particular purpose of showing the laboring classes that the Church is concerned for their welfare and thus winning back their support. Some of their members are avowedly and radically socialistic; others are quite the reverse, believing that the reign of the spirit of brotherhood within the framework of the existing economic system is the great end to be aimed at.

In this connection much stress has been laid upon the social teaching of Jesus. Professor J. R. Seeley's celebrated book on the ethics of Jesus—*Ecce Homo,* published in 1867—in which humanitarianism was claimed to be the great burden of Christ's message,

proved no less than epoch-making along this line. The following passage illustrates Seeley's position: "He might have left to all subsequent ages more instruction, if he had bestowed less time upon diminishing slightly the mass of evil around him, and lengthening by a span the short lives of the generation in the midst of which he lived. The whole amount of good done by such works of charity could not be great, compared with Christ's power of doing good; and, if they were intended, as is often supposed, merely as attestations of his divine mission, a few acts of the kind would have served their purpose as well as many. Yet we may see that they were in fact the great work of his life; his biography may be summed up in the words, 'he went about doing good'; his wise words were secondary to his beneficial deeds; the latter were not introductory to the former, but the former grew occasionally, and, as it were, accidentally out of the latter. The explanation of this is that Christ merely reduced to practice his own principle. His morality required that the welfare and happiness of others should not merely be remembered as a restraint upon action, but should be made the principal motive of action, and what he preached in words he preached still more impressively and zealously in deeds. He set the first and greatest example of a life wholly governed and guided by the passion of humanity." [1]

More recently the matter has been carried still further, and it has been claimed by many that Jesus was a genuine socialist. Not only was his interest wholly

[1] *Ecce Homo*, chapter XVI.

with the poorer classes, but his great aim was to introduce a new state of society, in which current distinctions between employers and laborers should be broken down, and all enjoy equal economic rights and opportunities. Many socialists of avowed anti-Christian sentiments have accepted this interpretation of Jesus' mission and work, and, while hating the Church and condemning it in unsparing fashion, speak of Jesus in terms of the greatest respect, and hold him up to the admiration of their followers as one of the great social reformers of the world.[1]

Whatever may be thought of this interpretation of Jesus' purpose, it is but an indication of the influence which the modern social emphasis is having upon Christian thought. Traditional Christian ideas, in fact, are undergoing extensive transformation as a result of the new social emphasis. The individualism of evangelicalism, with its primary concern for the salvation of the individual soul, is widely discredited. The old ascetic ideal is everywhere giving way to the social. Instead of holding themselves aloof from the world Christians are throwing themselves into it and striving to reform it. Holiness in the traditional sense of abstinence from sin is less highly valued than it was. The test of virtue is more and more coming to be the social test. The virtuous man is he who makes his influence tell for the improvement of society. Personal probity and uprightness, dissociated from the active service of one's fellows, is frequently

[1] Cf. Weinel's *Jesus im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (1903), p. 130 ff.

regarded to-day much as "mere morality" was by the Evangelicals. As virtue had value to them only in union with and in subordination to piety, so without the spirit of service personal morality seems to many a modern social reformer a mere empty husk.

I have been speaking hitherto of the modern social emphasis in its practical aspect as the spirit of humanitarianism, or the active effort to reform society. But there is much more in it than this. It means, in fact, the general substitution of the social for the individualistic point of view. The change makes itself felt in many ways, like the change from the static to the dynamic view of the world. The social conception, indeed, is closely parallel to the conception of evolution which has so vastly altered our view of nature and life. These two emphases, the evolutionary and the social, are the most notable features of present-day thought. And the two are closely akin. Both of them involve unity and continuity. All things are vitally connected one with another. Neither in nature nor in human life is there segregation, separation, sharp division, whether temporal or spacial. The unitary view of the world is dominant to-day, and it finds expression in the social emphasis as truly as in the idea of evolution. Man does not live alone. There are no isolated individuals complete in themselves. Our psychology is becoming socialized. Personality is recognized as a social product. Consciousness is pronounced a series of relations impossible apart therefrom. Education is taking account of all this, and is transforming its methods in consequence;

and religion is beginning to do the same. The evangelical notion of religion as a purely personal relation between God and the soul, setting man apart from his fellows, is widely regarded as an exploded fiction. There is no such thing as an isolated human soul, and if religion were for such a one, it would have no meaning. It is in part just because it has been thus understood in the past that it seems to so many to have lost all significance for our modern life. Religion is now seen to be a social growth, like speech. It roots itself in social relationships and expresses itself therein. If it is to be of worth, it must make such relationships easier, not harder, and must enrich not impoverish them.

It is therefore not an accident that the Church is now emphasized more than ever before by Protestants. Instead of being set over against that meaningless abstraction, the invisible Church—a mere collection of unrelated units—and condemned for its faults and corruptions in comparison therewith, it is interpreted as an expression of the necessarily social origin and character of religion, and is valued accordingly. So long as it was regarded as only an ark for the rescue of individual souls, providing personal salvation through the sacraments, the Protestant reaction against it was natural. But re-read in the light of the modern social emphasis, it is acquiring a significance not understood before either by Protestants or Catholics. In this connection it is worth referring to the great interest in church unity which is so notable a feature of present-day religious life and

thought. Here, too, the social emphasis—the emphasis on solidarity in place of separateness—is making its influence felt, and, aided by the progressive readjustment of religious values and the growing liberalism touching the traditional faith which mark our time, is profoundly affecting the attitude of most of our ecclesiastical bodies.

One of the results of the modern social emphasis is the extraordinary prominence, in present-day Christian thought and speech, of the Kingdom of God. And it is not merely that a traditional phrase has gained an unwonted importance. The impressive fact is that the phrase stands for something very different from that which has been commonly understood by it in the past. The Kingdom of God, which has usually in Christian history been identified with the heavenly kingdom lying in another world beyond the grave, or with the Christian church itself—an institution in the world but not of it—is now widely interpreted as the reign of the Christian spirit on this earth, or the control of all human relationships and institutions by the spirit of human sympathy, love and service.

In this connection we see also the intimate relation between the modern social emphasis and the doctrine of the immanence of God. Not an isolated God, separate from the world and human life, but a God in the world, one with it, and permeating its every part. Some have seen in our modern social ideas an argument for the doctrine of the Trinity, with its association of persons within the Godhead, or a reason for returning to some form of polythe-

ism, that our human society may have its parallel in a divine commonwealth. But the social emphasis suggests rather the socializing of Deity by recognizing God's connection with men, or better the enlarging of humanity by extending the boundaries of society to include God as well as men.

Our estimate of human character has also been socialized. We recognize that both virtue and vice are social products; that no man is solely responsible for his own sin any more than for his own goodness. The notion of a will working *in vacuo,* to which can be accurately meted out its merit and demerit, is seen to be an illusion. Our treatment of crime is beginning to feel the influence of the changed view. We are now primarily interested not to determine moral responsibility, but to discover means of cure. It is coming to be recognized as the end of justice, not that a criminal shall be punished as he deserves, but that he shall be reformed; or, if that prove impossible, that society shall be protected from him, whether he be responsible or not. That all this must involve a tremendous change in religious ideas goes without saying. Religious and ethical conceptions are so bound together that the one cannot be altered without the other. The old notions of human sin and divine punishment, of conversion, sanctification, and redemption, are all undergoing transformation. They are not necessarily repudiated. As a matter of fact, the modern social emphasis rehabilitates some of the old ideas which eighteenth-century rationalism thought forever discredited. Notable among these is the doctrine of

original sin. In its traditional form, of course, it is no longer tenable, but as an expression of social solidarity—as a protest against the idea of the individual as an isolated unit, creating his own character and determining his own destiny—it is entirely congenial to the modern mind.

But there is more in the social emphasis than the mere recognition of the corporate character of sin; there is in it also a recognition of the social character of redemption, and here modern thought breaks most completely with traditional Christian thought. If sin is social, virtue is too. The old doctrine provided for the inheritance of sin, but not for the inheritance of virtue. The latter, it was held, is due to divine grace which is imparted separately to each individual. All are sinners; some only are saved. There is oneness in sin, but not in salvation. This artificial distinction is overcome by the modern social way of looking at things. There is unity and association in the one case as truly as in the other. If sin is inherited, virtue is too. If the one is a social product, the other is also.[1] If there cannot be an isolated personality, or an isolated character, there cannot be isolated salvation. Nobody can be saved *from* society, he must be saved *with* it. Part of the social organism, he cannot be cut off from it, either by his sin or by his virtue, without destruction. He may

[1] Reference may be made here to Horace Bushnell's epoch-making book on *Christian Nurture* (1846, 1861), which did perhaps more than any other single agency to break down the extreme individualism of the old Puritan theology of America.

be better than many of his fellows, as he may be wiser or richer than they, but his virtue has no meaning any more than his wisdom or wealth, except as he is related to them and shares their life. We may speak of his being saved as he overcomes sin and grows in grace and holiness, but he is still a part of the human family, involved in its destiny, saved or lost with it. The trouble with the old theology was that it made earnest with the social solidarity of the natural man, but denied it for the redeemed man. The trouble with rationalism was that it recognized social solidarity in neither case. Under the influence of the modern social emphasis we are coming to see that it holds in both cases, and as much in the one as in the other; that salvation as well as sin is a social conception; that no man can be saved of himself or to himself alone; that to be saved in the full sense of the word means to be part of a saved race; that anything short of a redeemed humanity—of a human society Christianized through and through—is unworthy to be the aim of Christian effort, and that apart from such a Christianized society there is no real and abiding salvation for any man.

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

In the ancient and medieval church religion was commonly viewed as an objective thing given man from without. Whether natural or revealed, it had its origin in the will of God, and it came to men as a gift from above. It did not grow up spontaneously within the human soul; it was brought to men's knowledge by God himself, speaking either in the works of nature or in the pages of a book. Religion being thus externally conceived, religious authority was interpreted in the same way. Religion being God-given, not man-created, authority has its seat in God, not in man.

Already in the second century of our era the acceptance of Christianity by many adherents of the current dualistic philosophy of the day led to interpretations of the gospel which seemed to most Christians to destroy altogether its saving efficacy and moral power. The teachers of the Church consequently were driven to take the position that Christianity is a revelation of the truth as well as of the will of God, and that sound belief is as much a condition of salvation as right conduct. The moral

wickedness of unbelief or wrong belief was insisted on. God's law, it was held, demands purity of faith as well as of life. This position has been shared by the greater part of the Christian Church even down to our own day. To believe rightly has always been counted a fundamental Christian duty as well as to live rightly.

In searching for a standard by which to determine what is Christian truth the leaders of the Church were also driven in the second and third centuries to see in the Church itself the mouthpiece of God and to recognize its power to declare infallibly his will and truth. This, too, became a part of the common belief of Christians and has ever since continued such within Catholicism both East and West. The Christian Church is regarded by Catholics as the only ark of salvation, outside of which there is no saving grace, and also as the supreme authority upon earth in the political and moral as well as in the religious sphere. It knows the will of God and can utter it as can no other institution or person on earth. A divine, not a human organization, it must be listened to as the voice of God for whom it speaks. The heretic who refuses to believe what the Church teaches and the obstinate offender who refuses to do what it commands are children of perdition, equally with the schismatic and the unbeliever who are entirely without its saving pale.

In the ancient and middle ages the authority of the Church was not commonly felt as a burden. On the contrary, as the way of salvation could be known

only if it were revealed, the Church which mediated it to men performed the greatest of all services. To the Church they owed the possibility of eternal life and to her authority they bowed not grudgingly but gladly. This, at any rate, was true so long as the Church was in sympathy with the highest ideals and aspirations of the age and voiced its best thought and impulse. But when, as happened in the later Middle Ages, new points of view, new ideals, new aspirations began to appear, which were alien to the traditional ways, difficulty at once arose. Men found the authority of the Church oppressive, not because she was better but worse than they. She stood for ideas which the advancing intelligence of the world had outgrown, or for ideals which the best men of the age had transcended. The result was the outbreak of a conflict of tragic significance to everyone who found himself involved in it. To accept and submit when acceptance and submission do violence to intellect and conscience is exceeding difficult, and yet to refuse to do so is to imperil one's eternal salvation. Some made the venture, but most continued to submit, though often grudgingly and even sullenly.

Luther had no moral or intellectual difficulties which made the authority of the Church oppressive to him. He was a devout and credulous Catholic until his religious experience and the conclusions he drew from it brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical officialdom. When the conflict came, he found himself in possession of a new principle of assurance that made further dependence upon the ministrations of

the Catholic Church unnecessary, and so he became the founder of an independent form of Christianity. He had his new gospel before he ever thought of questioning the authority of the Church. The break came originally not with the Church's principle of authority but with its conception of salvation. His followers for the most part took the opposite course. Long impatient with ecclesiastical authority, political, moral, and intellectual, they did not venture to repudiate it until Luther's gospel supplied them with a guarantee of safety. What with him was primary and fundamental, with them was only a means to another end. It is not surprising, therefore, that his vital interpretation of saving faith should degenerate among them into a mere empty formula.

When driven to break with the authority of the Church, Luther at first substituted for it the word of God, by which he meant the gospel of God's forgiving love in Christ. This gave him all he needed for life and salvation, and other authority was quite unnecessary. The believer, as a child of God, possesses the impulse to live as a child of God should; and without the pressure of any external law does instinctively and spontaneously what God would have him do. All questions of orthodoxy are unimportant. Faith in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ supplies motive and guidance adequate for all the emergencies of life. But gradually Luther was driven by theological controversy to substitute the Bible for the gospel, and to put the word of God in the traditional sense as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in place of

the Church upon which his Catholic opponents were standing and in place of the indwelling Spirit or inner light to which his radical adversaries were appealing. His early indifference to aught but the gospel of God's forgiving love gave way in course of time to concern for many other things. Divergencies in matters which might fairly have been regarded as entirely unimportant loomed large in his eyes when they became symptoms of another spirit, an alien set of ideals, or a different practical program from his own. The Bible to which he then appealed as his authority, often reading it in the most slavishly literal fashion, had long been the favorite resort of all critics of the principles or practices of the Church, and his use of it gave it permanent and supreme authority within Protestantism.

The change in the organ of authority from Church to Bible did not mean the abandonment of the medieval for the modern point of view. As a matter of fact, the new authority was just as external as the old, and submission to it just as slavish. The change, to be sure, promoted liberty, both by breaking the control of the Catholic Church, the greatest foe of freedom, and also by encouraging the formation of mutually hostile sects, based upon diverse interpretations of the Bible. But the principle of authority was as medieval in historic Protestantism as in Catholicism, and it was only lack of historical imagination which for so long prevented Protestants from realizing the fact.

Theoretically, indeed, the Protestant conception of

authority was even more mechanical and inelastic than the Catholic, for the latter at least had a living court of appeal which might conceivably take account of the new revelations and the growing wisdom of the ages; while the former had a finished revelation and a closed canon which could never be subtracted from or added to until the end of time. Fortunately for themselves Protestants have commonly been better than their own principles, and have so re-read the Bible in successive centuries as to make it practically a new book and thus adapt it to the needs of one age after another. Had the various Protestant sects not seen fit to record their interpretations of Biblical truths in credal forms, and to make the acceptance of these forms binding upon their adherents, the process of reinterpretation and readaptation might have gone on more freely and with much less friction than it has. But there are limits after all to the possibilities of such a process, and there can be little question that the Protestant doctrine of an infallible and self-interpreting Bible is bound to disappear from the minds of thinking men long before the Catholic doctrine of an infallible Church.

The first real break with the medieval principle of religious authority came with rationalism. The break, to be sure, was very gradual. The rationalists learned only slowly to appreciate the inconsistency between their principles and the traditional notion of authority as it existed within Protestantism, and the old position was hesitantly abandoned. Most of the moderate rationalists of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries distinguished between what they called natural and revealed religion. The former was made up of truths discoverable and demonstrable by human reason. Natural religion not having proved sufficient to guarantee virtue, it was supplemented by revealed religion. This, too, must accord with reason, in the sense that it must not be irrational, and that there must be positive grounds, such as prophecy and miracle, for recognizing it as a revelation. Once so recognized, it became a guarantee for truths which we could not have discovered for ourselves. When acknowledged as revealed truths, the acceptance of them was as necessary to salvation as the acceptance of the truths of natural religion. They were part of the will of God, and their authority was absolute.

The principle of religious authority thus remained as medieval as ever, but the authority itself was now rationally tested and obliged to exhibit its credentials before being accepted. This, of course, was a step in the direction of a break with the old position. By the deists the break was carried still further. They rejected supernatural truth altogether. Only that was recognized as true in religion and hence as binding upon men which might be discovered by the unaided power of the human intellect. Reason, it was maintained, is supreme not simply in the negative sense of having the power to test but in the positive sense of having the power to discover all religious truth. Thus human reason came into complete control, and religious authority was rooted in its authoritative and law-giving character.

By some of the deists reason was believed to be the same in all men, and the truths of natural religion were regarded as everywhere, always, and unalterably the same. There are truths which every right-minded man must accept and according to which he must live. The principles of religion and morality are universal and common to all. This meant the retention of the notion of absoluteness and infallibility in connection with religious authority, even though its supernatural character was denied.

On the other hand there were those who recognized that human reason may vary in different races and at different periods and even in different men; that one may accept in good faith under the guidance of one's own reason facts and principles which elsewhere are rejected. The claim of such men was not that we are under obligation to believe any particular truths and doctrines, such as the existence of God and immortality, but that we are under obligation to live up to the light we have, to the best we know, to whatever we individually think true and right. Each man's reason is a law unto himself, not in the negative sense merely, but in the positive, and his highest duty is to be true to it. Here, of course, the notion of infallibility altogether disappears, and human reason is regarded as fallible and variable. But we are, nevertheless, under obligation to follow it, for it is the best and surest guide we have. The extreme individualism of this position was genuinely congenial to the spirit of the eighteenth century.

In the Evangelical reaction of that century there

was a return to external authority of the most absolute and mechanical kind. The Bible was again put in the forefront as a supernatural book containing an infallible revelation of divine truth which everyone was bound to accept if he would be saved. That belief in the infallibility and authority of the Bible survived into the nineteenth century, and is still widespread within the Church, is due to Evangelicalism. Had it not brought back the old supernaturalism at a time when it was fast disappearing, and made the infallibility of the Bible an essential element in Christian faith, the authority of the Scriptures could not have survived the fast spreading rationalism and scepticism of the age.

The whole question of religious authority was placed upon a different plane by Schleiermacher, whose general conception of religion has been described in an earlier chapter. According to Schleiermacher, the seat of religious authority is the religious experience. Religion is rooted in the feelings. The religious man is he who feels his oneness with the Absolute. In this oneness, and the experiences to which it gives rise, religious authority resides. Where our life roots itself in the divine, where the divine comes to expression in the individual life, there is the ultimate basis of all obligation. No one is bound by traditional principles and formulas, by external standards or rules. As a religious man he has in his own religious consciousness the ultimate court from which there is no appeal. Christian theology therefore is not a system of metaphysics, or an effort to

explain the world of man and nature, but a formulation of the truths given in the religious experience of the man who theologizes. If he have no religious experience, that is, if he have no consciousness of God, he cannot be a theologian. And if he have no Christian experience, that is, if he have no consciousness of sin removed through Christ's mediation of oneness with God, he cannot be a Christian theologian. Theology is a descriptive, not a speculative science. It is concerned simply to set forth the contents of the religious consciousness. Its materials are given in experience, just as much as the materials of any natural science are given in the phenomena of the physical world. To go beyond these materials and to have regard to other considerations is as destructive of genuine theology as it would be of astronomy, or physics, or chemistry.

In accordance with this conception of theology, Schleiermacher refused to make assertions concerning objects lying outside the range of human experience. Theology has to do with the phenomena of experience alone, not with objective reality or things in themselves. His doctrine of God includes, at least ostensibly, not an account of what God is in himself, of his nature and attributes apart from their manifestation, but only of our apprehension of him, of what we find him to be in our own religious life. The traditional method of deducing the attributes of God from the notion of infinity, and ascribing omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence to him because they belong necessarily to our idea of an infinite being, he utterly

repudiated. The dogma of the Trinity, for instance, he treated not as a statement of eternal distinctions within the Godhead but simply as an indication of the various ways in which God relates himself to the experience of Christians.

The experience to which Schleiermacher appealed was of course a very indefinite thing. It involved certain feelings and eventuated in various ideas and activities, but it was impossible to tell in how far it was the fruit of an immediate consciousness of the divine, and in how far it was due to the influence of mere example and tradition. The nature of the religious experience itself and still more the interpretations put upon it must depend in large measure upon the particular circle in which one was brought up and upon the beliefs and practices, religious and otherwise, which there prevailed. But this is simply to say that there is no such thing as Christian experience in the abstract, or any other kind of experience in the abstract; there are only concrete experiences. And hence Schleiermacher's principle was not fitted to lead to an ideal dogmatic which should formulate the utterances of an ideal Christian experience independent of all local and temporary limitations. He himself recognized this and regarded dogmatic theology and religious authority in general as by their very nature relative and changing.

Schleiermacher's conception of religious authority was genuinely subjective, and in this respect truly modern. And yet it was not exclusively subjective, for it took account of objective reality, both divine

and human. A man's religious consciousness is the consciousness of oneness with the divine of which he is a part, and of whose infinity he is a temporal and limited manifestation. His experience, therefore, is valid only as the divine enters into it, a divine transcending the man himself and putting eternity and infinity of meaning into him. Moreover, there is also the objective social reality, the experience of other religious men. Their experiences are not isolated and foreign to his own and utterly without significance to him. On the contrary, they are but expressions of the larger whole of which he, too, is a part, and the same divinity speaks in them as in him. All are bound together through their oneness with the infinite, and their religious experiences are akin because they involve the consciousness of the same infinite. It is impossible for the religious man to stand wholly apart from other religious men and to divorce himself entirely from them. While his own individual experience must in the nature of the case be the ultimate authority for him, the experience of others cannot be other than illuminative of his own. This is particularly the case with Christians. Their consciousness of the divine is mediated by Christ, and the divine is read in the light of his revelation. There is, therefore, a oneness about it even beyond that which binds together the experiences of all religious men. Thus a place was made by Schleiermacher for the social element in the sphere of religious authority, and one of the controlling tendencies of the modern age came to its full rights, while at the same time the

fruits of the eighteenth century development of the individual were conserved. No formula indeed could better express the combination of the two elements, the one and the all, than the formula of Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher's recognition of the social element has been reinforced in modern times by the study of the history and psychology of religion which has made it abundantly evident that our beliefs are largely social products, and that the notion that our individual reasons work in isolation to create our own independent faiths is a pure fiction. One of the most interesting expositions of this point of view is to be found in Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, published in 1895.[1]

The apprehension of the fact that our religious faiths are of social origin does not necessarily mean that we are to abdicate all responsibility for them and submit ourselves blindly to the dictates of an external authority. On the contrary, we possess the same rights of criticism in this field as in every other; and though "Looked at from the outside as one among the complex conditions which produce belief, reason appears relatively insignificant and ineffectual; not only appears so, but *must* be so, if human society is to be made possible"; yet "Looked at from the inside, it claims by an inalienable title to be supreme. Measured by its results it may be little; measured by its rights it is everything. There is no problem it may not investigate, no belief which it may not assail, no

[1] Compare especially Part III: *Some Causes of Belief.*

principle which it may not test. It cannot, even by its own voluntary act, deprive itself of universal jurisdiction, as, according to a once fashionable theory, primitive man, on entering the social state, contracted himself out of his natural rights and liberties. On the contrary, though its claims may be ignored, they cannot be repudiated; and even those who shrink from the criticism of dogma as sin, would probably admit that they do so because it is an act forbidden by those they are bound to obey; do so, that is to say, nominally at least, for a reason which, at any moment, if it should think fit, reason itself may reverse." [1] In other words, wherever our beliefs have come from, and impossible as it may be to judge them objectively and without prejudice, no external authority may deny us the right, if we choose to exercise it, to test them and to modify them as the needs of our nature may demand. And so we come out at the same point with Schleiermacher.

What I have said of Schleiermacher's general attitude in the matter of religious authority serves to indicate the place assigned by him to Bible and creeds. They are not authoritative codes, intended to bind the minds and consciences of men. They are simply records of religious experiences enjoyed in other days by other men, many of them great religious geniuses, and particularly by Jesus Christ, the greatest of them all, and the one by whom the consciousness of God has been mediated to us. The Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament, have value for the light they

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, p. 222.

throw upon what such men have felt and thought. They thus serve to guide and it may be often to correct our reading of our own experience. If we find the conclusions drawn therefrom entirely out of line with those of other Christians, we may well suspect ourselves and interrogate our experience anew to determine whether we have really interpreted it aright —a method which applies in every other sphere, as well as in religion.

This naturally opened the door for the inclusion within theology of a great many traditional ideas, simply because traditional. This was illustrated even in Schleiermacher's own system, which in spite of his freedom and independence yet bore a surprising resemblance at many points to the old Protestant dogmatics. In fact it is clear that he was often simply reinterpreting a given doctrine instead of formulating afresh the testimony of his own experience or that of his Christian brethren—a very common practice with liberal theologians of our own age as well. Nevertheless, though thus furnishing ground, particularly since his day, for the return of many outworn beliefs, the combination of the subjective and the objective marked a real advance upon the extreme individualism of the eighteenth century and was in harmony with the larger vision and experience of more recent times.

Of course, where Schleiermacher's conception of religious authority prevails, all legalism disappears. In the last analysis authority is internal and subjective and is rooted in life, not in codes or formulas or rules.

No man is under a legal obligation to accept the teachings of his own religious experience, but once having recognized its divine character he instinctively interrogates it and is guided by it quite without the pressure of external law.

Similarly the traditional evidences to which resort has commonly been had in support of the authority of Christianity or of the Bible become unnecessary and lose all real significance. To the man who has a consciousness of his own oneness with the divine prophecy and miracles are unimportant. The divine in other men and things is validated for him by its harmony with his own consciousness. He depends not upon them but upon himself, and his ultimate test of their divineness must lie not in external evidences of any kind but in their immediate appeal to his own religious nature. Coleridge was true to Schleiermacher's principle when he declared in familiar phrase that "whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit." [1]

Still more important was the disappearance of all the old claims of universality, absoluteness, and infallibility. One's own experience is authoritative for oneself only, not for others. They may gain instruction and inspiration from it, but more than that cannot be demanded of them. Moreover, experience is a growing and changing thing. As the years pass one is conscious, if spiritually alive, that one is entering into new reaches and penetrating new depths

[1] *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* Letter II.

of life. To postulate finality for any stage of one's experience is to be guilty not only of unpardonable presumption but of gross ignorance of the conditions of all life. An external code might be final, a living experience in the very nature of the case cannot be.

This recognition of the incompleteness and consequent fallibility of human experience may consort with either of two attitudes toward the ultimate ground of authority. It may be maintained, as it is by many modern theologians, that while all the existing organs of religious authority—Bible, church, and reason, whether one's own or the community's—are fallible in greater or less degree, there lies back of them a fixed and unchanging standard to which they all approximate. This is in reality the old absoluteness modified under the compulsion particularly of Biblical and historical criticism, and they who share it still crave external authority for their religious faith as truly as any traditionalist. With it is to be contrasted the thoroughgoing relativity of their point of view who believe that growth and change belong to the very essence of reality. This belief has been greatly forwarded by the spread of modern evolutionary ideas. Where they prevail the tendency is to think of everything as in the making, and to regard the notion of the absolute in the sense of the fixed and unchanging as a mere chimera. According to such relativists the idea of an infallible authority is not simply historically unsound, no such authority having actually appeared, but essentially erroneous, none being possible in the very nature of the case. For when all is in

flux and when change not fixity is the necessary condition of existence, the ideals and principles of to-day are bound to be modified by the enlarging experience of to-morrow. No conception has had a more disintegrating effect upon traditional notions of authority than the conception of evolution even where its results have not been as radical as those just indicated and nothing has done so much to undermine the old dogmatism once shared by all the sects.

But to return to Schleiermacher—quite apart from the conception of evolution and the question as to the nature of ultimate reality, his teaching concerning religious authority has had great influence in all parts of the Christian world. In England Coleridge represented the same position, and in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* published after his death in 1840, the principle of Schleiermacher, whether learned from him or developed independently, was applied to the Christian Scriptures and the formula was given for their treatment by English and American Christians of modern sympathies.

In America Emerson and Horace Bushnell have been perhaps the most famous representatives of Schleiermacher's type of thought. In his Harvard Divinity School address of 1838, Emerson introduced it to the American theological world; and through not a few sermons, including for instance the one on the Christian as a Prophet, Bushnell gave a moderate form of it currency within the more orthodox wing of American Christianity which it has never lost. That God still reveals himself to men as truly as he ever

did—this has become a commonplace in many Christian circles. It is indeed a natural corollary of the widespread belief in divine immanence. To-day there are few American Christians of liberal tendencies, still fewer German and English Christians, who do not recognize that religious authority is a matter of the spirit, not of the letter, that its seat is to be found ultimately, not in external rules or formulas or codes, but in a man's experience, and that only that can bind his thought and conscience which vitally appeals to him and meets with a response in his own inner nature.

I have been speaking only of religious authority, but as a matter of fact the conception of authority and our attitude toward it have changed in all lines, and the change in the religious sphere is only a part of the larger transformation. Authority has everywhere ceased to be, as it once was, absolute, infallible, despotic, and legal, and has become relative, provisional, and fallible. Thus in the political sphere, democracy has widely taken the place of despotism, and the people rule themselves, at least in theory, instead of being ruled by powers imposed upon them from above and answerable only to heaven. In the domestic sphere, too; the old conception has generally given way. The head of the family is no longer an absolute ruler, free to do as he pleases with his children. They are everywhere recognized as possessing characters and personalities of their own, and the ideal of the modern parent is not the subjection of the child's will, but his development into strong and independent manhood.

The home has become the abode of free spirits rather than of master and slave.

The same is true throughout the whole field of education. Not compulsion but inspiration is the controlling ideal; not to impart truth by authority but to train the mind to discover truth for itself; not submission to the teacher's opinion but independence in forming one's own opinions under the guidance of an older and wiser mind. The rise of the elective system in our colleges and universities is but a sign of the same tendency. Not that there shall be no teachers and no guides, but that there shall be liberty instead of authority, and the student's mind be disciplined and developed by his free choice of subjects with all the risks of loss and waste involved therein.

In the scientific world, as well, there is no longer unquestioning acceptance of the dicta of an external and infallible authority, of a text which must be blindly followed. The appeal to-day is to observation and experiment, and it is recognized that further investigation may result in changes of opinion in the future as it has in the past. And yet, particularly in the scientific realm, we discover that authority is by no means extinct. It has simply changed its character. The average man of to-day accepts the conclusions of scientists without trying to test them for himself or to convince himself of their soundness by his own experiments. He believes in the verdict of the experts in every line and is entirely satisfied to receive his knowledge from them. But this recognition of their authority is after all very different from

the old submission to a higher power. There is no hint of infallibility or of the supernatural about it, and the conclusions are recognized to be based on experiment and to be verifiable thereby. We may not be in a position to test them for ourselves, but unless they can be tested by other experts and their soundness shown, they fail to command our assent. So long as experts disagree, we know that the results are provisional only, and even when they agree we are aware that new light may yet be discovered which will upset the most widely accepted conclusions. The basis of faith is thus in the last analysis not submission to an external authority, but belief in the experimental verifiability of accepted conclusions. This is the general attitude of intelligent men to-day toward alleged truth in every field. The age of passive submission to authority, whether it dictate truth or conduct, is outgrown. The world has come to maturity, even though it still contains multitudes of the immature.

I spoke in some detail of Schleiermacher's idea of religious authority. Akin to it and yet in some respects significantly unlike was the conception of Ritschl. According to him we find our religious authority in the ideal we set before ourselves, or in the purpose to which we commit ourselves. The authority is thus subjective, inhering in our own ideal or purpose, and yet it is also in a sense objective, for we find it embodied in Christ. As the revealer of the ideal which we recognize as supreme and as the great exponent of the purpose which we make our own, he becomes authoritative to us in a sense which he was

not to Schleiermacher. And yet even here the authority is not absolute. The record of Christ's life and teaching must be tested and only that admitted as authoritative which truly represents him. And still further Christ himself must be tested by himself. Not his whole career and his total personality have authority, but the purpose which he reveals and which we adopt as our own. So far as he is true to this, he is supreme. But if it happened that he failed at any time or in any degree to realize it, his authority would be limited. Not that he would cease to have any authority, but that it extends no further than his own fulfillment of the purpose which we share with him. And the purpose itself to which we yield allegiance is not authoritative because it is Christ's, or because it originates without us, but because it is our own, the highest we know.

There is a close kinship between this conception and that of Schleiermacher, for both are in the last analysis subjective; in the one case our own experience, in the other our own ideal is final for us. And yet there is a fundamental difference, for the one looks forward and the other back. Our own consciousness of the divine enjoyed by us in past and present constitutes in the one case our final court of appeal, in the other our appeal is to an end outside us, the kingdom of God, to whose realization we give ourselves. Not what we have enjoyed, but what we hope to accomplish, supplies the criterion; and not that which appeals to our religious nature, but that which forwards the end is true and good to us. There is thus ob-

jectivity in it, in a sense not shared by Schleiermacher's idea, and activity as well. It is really a species of pragmatism, a testing of religious truths and religious values by their workableness, or by their fitness to promote an object which we make our own, that is, the kingdom of God.

There is a marked social element in this notion of religious authority, but it bears a very different character from the social element in Schleiermacher's theory. That it is not individualistic, pure and simple, is due not to the fact that others share with us the consciousness of the infinite, but that the purpose itself is social, the promotion of the reign of love and sympathy and service among men.

Of course all legalism is absent from this conception as from Schleiermacher's, and all absoluteness and infallibility as well. The ideal binds us, not as an external rule, but as an end which we freely make our own, and though the ideal may remain the same, the means to its realization must vary with different persons and communities and with changing circumstances and conditions. There cannot be final and universally valid truth or forms of conduct, so long as the purpose is to be fulfilled progressively in a constantly developing world.

The effect of Ritschl's principle has undoubtedly been to narrow somewhat the standard of authority. Not the total religious experience is appealed to, but the supreme purpose to which we give ourselves. And inasmuch as he finds this purpose revealed in Jesus Christ, Ritschl makes the principle of authority even

more definite and limited. And yet it is quite broad and flexible enough for its purpose. For it is not a test of truth in general which it offers us, a test which we do not need and with which religion has nothing whatever to do, but a practical criterion. That which contributes to the promotion of the kingdom of God is Christian, whether it be truth or conduct; that which hinders it or is indifferent to it cannot claim the name.

It is clear from what has been said about Schleiermacher and Ritschl that it is not simply the conception of religious authority that has changed in modern times, but the whole notion of divine revelation, for that matter the whole notion of religion. Revelation as conceived by Schleiermacher and Ritschl is not the communication of a system of truths, and religion does not consist in their acceptance. Revelation is the awakening of human consciousness to the presence of the divine, or the eliciting of human devotion to a divine ideal; and to be religious is simply to have this consciousness or this devotion. But where religion and revelation are thus interpreted, authority is a matter of small moment. It is not authority we need, but inspiration; not a code or rule or creed or system of doctrines, but the presence of God and the compulsion of a divine purpose. Codes and rules are mechanical and cramping in their effects. Spiritual and ethical maturity is attained only when dependence upon them is outgrown. It is therefore not simply that the idea of religious authority has changed, but that the need of it has ceased. We are living in an age when communion in religious things and coöperation in all good

works are becoming more and more generally possible to those whose religious beliefs, like their philosophical and scientific beliefs, are widely diverse; when not creed but purpose is the force that binds men together in a common institution and a common cause.

There have been few developments within the sphere of religious thought more important than this transformation of the notion of religious authority, and this change of attitude toward the subject on the part of Christian men. It has made possible the growth and wide acceptance of the various other modern ideas of which I have spoken in earlier chapters. If the old notion of authority still prevailed, Christians would still be obliged to draw their ideas from Bible and tradition, and such views as have been sketched, out of line in many respects as not a few of them are with the teachings of Scripture and Church, could gain no standing within the Christian community. The striking fact in the modern situation is that though their disharmony with the authorities of the past is frankly recognized, they are nevertheless widely current within most of our churches and are accepted by many of the foremost leaders of religious thought and life.

In connection with the subject of religious authority it may be worth while to speak a little more particularly, even at the risk of some repetition, about the authority of the Bible and the development through which it has passed. In the Middle Ages its absolute authority in all lines was everywhere

recognized, but the Church was believed to be its infallible interpreter, and hence ecclesiastical authority supplemented or it may even be said supplanted Biblical authority. At the Reformation the Church's claim to infallibility was rejected, and the Bible, interpreted by itself or by the Holy Spirit who was its author, was made at least nominally the sole authority, and that not only in religion and ethics, but also in history, science, and politics. Gradually, however, its authority was broken down. The deists in denying a supernatural revelation of course denied also an infallible Bible. Their denial was sometimes made on wholly *a priori* grounds; sometimes it was confirmed by one or another form of criticism.

Historical criticism was applied by such men as Woolston and Bolingbroke in England, Voltaire in France, and Reimarus in Germany. Particularly by the last named the impossibility of many of the facts recorded in it was shown, and the irreconcilable inconsistencies between various parts of the record.

By the deists Tindal, Morgan, and Chubb, its ethical teaching was made the chief object of attack. In this connection the Old Testament suffered the severest criticism, but the New was not spared, and strictures were passed by some even upon Christ himself, as for instance by Tindal, who found his principle of unlimited love impracticable and fanatical.

Literary criticism, too, commenced at an early day, and reached large proportions in the eighteenth century, though it became widely influential only in the nineteenth. Already by the Roman Catholics, Valla

and Erasmus, in the early sixteenth century, the process was begun, but only in a mild way. The early Protestant divines as a rule would have none of it. But in the seventeenth century the Catholics Simon and Le Clerc and the philosophers Hobbes and Spinoza made important contributions, and in the eighteenth century its principles were applied more or less consistently by Astruc in France, by Eichhorn, Herder and Ilgen in Germany, and by Geddes in Scotland. In the nineteenth century criticism both literary and historical was carried on with extraordinary vigor by a multitude of Biblical scholars, both in Europe and America, and the general result has been the undermining of the old-time view of the Bible as an infallible and inerrant book.

Meanwhile the developing physical science of the modern age had a similar effect. Already in the seventeenth century difficulty was felt with the account of the creation of the world in six days, with the story of Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still, and the like. The first impulse of theologians was to deny the new conclusions of science, because they contradicted holy writ. Luther and many another Protestant denounced the Copernican astronomy as anti-Christian, and Galileo and Bruno suffered the condemnation of the Catholics on the same account.

In the end, however, many of the results of scientific investigation were too well established to admit of doubt, and then the process of harmonization began. As in earlier days Biblical students had harmonized the Books of Kings with the Books of Chron-

icles, or one Gospel with another, now they undertook to show the complete agreement of the Bible with the best results of science. The six days of creation were interpreted as six geological periods. The geocentric statements of various Biblical authors were taken as intentional accommodations to the popular conceptions of the age. Jesus' references to demons were understood in the same way, and with each new scientific discovery the method was applied afresh, the text being tortured to fit the new facts, or its authors being represented as modern scientists, consciously adapting themselves to the ignorance of earlier ages. The violence thus done to the Bible and the contempt brought upon it in the eyes of multitudes of intelligent men have been simply incalculable.

Finally, as the historical spirit began to spread in the late eighteenth century, and a saner view of the past became common, theologians awoke to the futility of the harmonistic method, and some of them were brave enough to abandon the notion of Biblical infallibility in the scientific and historical realms and to confine it to the spheres of religion and morals. This marked a great step in the emancipation of the Christian world from the bondage of an earlier day. But it was long before the masses of the Church were willing to take it, at any rate in America, and only in our own time can the older view be said to have been generally abandoned.

But even here the process could not stop. The infallibility which was finally given up in other spheres could not in the very nature of the case be permanently

maintained in those of religion and morals. The disintegrating process could not be confined to certain circumscribed areas. Doubt at one point must in the long run engender doubt at other points as well. There are still multitudes who occupy the halfway position just referred to, who recognize the historical and scientific errors of the Bible while maintaining its infallibility and absolute authority in religion and ethics; but their number is steadily decreasing. This final process has been made possible by the changed view of authority in general to which I have already referred. So long as religious authority was conceived as external, legal, and absolute, so long as it was supposed necessary to believe certain truths in order to escape eternal condemnation, no other estimate of the Bible than the old one was possible. Whatever might be true of its scientific and historical character, it must be a final authority at least in religion and morals, or it must be abandoned and resort be had either to complete scepticism or to an infallible Church. And hence in modern Biblical criticism the Romanists see one of the strongest grounds for expecting the return of multitudes of Protestants to the Catholic fold. But when the notion of authority itself was changed, the old demand for absoluteness and infallibility disappeared. And as the belief arose originally only in answer to a need, it inevitably faded out when the need ceased to be felt. When men's religious needs demand infallibility, they will have it, whether or no, in Bible, in Church, or somewhere else. But when their needs are satisfied without it, no traditional dogma or

ecclesiastical decree can long compel them to accept it in these modern days, when the whole trend of development is against it, and when it means an impassable chasm between their secular and their religious thinking.

The process of which I have been speaking was also made easier by the growing recognition of the fact, already insisted upon by such men as the deist Matthew Tindal in England, and by Lessing, Herder and Schleiermacher in Germany, that the Bible and Christianity are not identical, and that the severest criticism of the former does not affect the latter.[1] This was the most important step in the emancipation of modern Protestants from the bondage of external authority, and it has made it possible for them to look without dismay upon Biblical criticism, and to engage in it themselves without abandoning Christianity or denying its divine origin and saving power. And as a matter of fact even the Bible itself has gained, perhaps, as much if not more than it has lost, from the Biblical criticism of the last hundred years. For the widespread loss of faith in it as an infallible authority has not meant its condemnation and rejection. With some this has no doubt been the result. But to multitudes it has become a far more interesting and living book than it was. The history which it records is studied with a new enthusiasm and understanding, its literary values are appreciated as they could not be when it was interpreted as an authoritative code, and the realization of its extraordinary humanness has

[1] See my *Protestant Thought Before Kant*, p. 248.

given it a fascination which it too often lacked when it was supposed to be the immediate product of the Holy Spirit. Read as other books are read, it appears in a fresh light to many to whom it was formerly a sealed book, as to many others who found it uncongenial and even repellent. And what is still more, under the influence of the growing conception of historical development, and the widening range of spiritual sympathy which mark our age preëminently, men are coming more and more generally to recognize the Bible's permanent and incomparable spiritual worth. Though the whole modern world has transcended it at many points, it remains a unique record of developing religious experience, aspiration, and reflection, and it contains the highest gift of God to man, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians have never found it more helpful and inspiring than now, and outside the Church the characteristic attitude of the present day toward it is not, as it once was, in revolt against the extravagant claims everywhere made for it, contempt and hatred, but growing interest and respect. All lovers of the Bible may well rejoice and take heart from the existing situation. For distress and discouragement there is no room where the past is known and to-day's relation to it comprehended.

I have traced the rise of some of our modern religious ideas, but many of them it has been impossible even to refer to. Enough has perhaps been said, however, to show the general direction in which religious thought has been moving during recent generations.

We cannot be sure that it will continue to move along these or similar lines. Permanence and finality indeed are the last thing we can anticipate for present day thought upon any subject. But we may fairly hope that in the future as in the past there will be growing adaptation between Christianity and the world in which it lives. The Church has commonly been slow to change—a great institution necessarily is. But in the end it has always adjusted itself to the ethical and intellectual tendencies of the age. Had it not it would long ago have perished from the earth. That Christianity continues to reveal this adaptability to the developing mind of man is a proof that it is alive, not dead, and is the best guarantee of its permanent influence and power.

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